March
Weird Tales
35¢
"Call Not Their Names"
EVERIL WORRELL

### *An Arm Across the Sea*

*"THE ARM" by Justin Dowling is in this issue of WEIRD TALES. An interesting story, and written by an interesting man. About himself Mr. Dowling writes:*

*At school I wrote blood chilling essays. My English master said I would either end up as a writer or on the gallows.*

*I have been in journalism for ten years and have written short stories for about as long. Before the war I was offered a job as a cricket professional in England. In a tank action in Italy, fighting alongside the Americans, I lost my right arm and suffered shell shock. That was the end of my cricket career. Instead I married a doctor and have been dosed with pills ever since. My best writing effort was a story I sold about American kids. I have never been in America.*

*My ambition? To see America and work on a newspaper there.*

*The story "The Arm" took me eight months to plan and write. I re-wrote it six times. The idea sprang from my own experience when I took up weight lifting to strengthen my arm. I feel that only a man who has lost a limb can write with any feeling and conviction about a character with one arm. I, myself, have suffered nightmares my character suffered in the story. Best wishes.*

Justin Dowling,
Sunday Tribune, Durban, S. A.

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The Editor, WEIRD TALES
9 Rockefeller Plaza
New York 20, N. Y.

*I have just finished the January 1954 issue of WEIRD TALES, and still feel the chills up, and down my spine. I have been a reader of this magazine for many years, and never fail to enjoy it. My husband has become a faithful reader also, and that is a victory for your magazine, because he does very little reading.*

*With my subscription may I wish you, and WEIRD TALES many more years of success.*

Mrs. T. W. Lancaster,
Seaside, Ore.

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Cover by EVAN SINGER

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D. McILWRAITH, *Editor*

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# Call Not THEIR NAMES

by Everil Worrel

SHALIMAR walked between the two tall men into the room. She had committed herself at last. She was to marry Merlin Caliver in the fall.

Ice hardens and separates itself from the flowing ocean streams and forms its hard, crystalline pinnacles. Ice floats—the top of the berg rides sky-lit; and this makes the earth possible to mankind.

The thing that lurked hidden and crystallized somewhere in the girl Shalimar was a weightier matter. It was submerged; over it flowed the fluidity of life—but it was there; it was real, it was danger. Of the stuff of dreams, perhaps; how much more solid are one's waking thoughts?

She was marrying into a family of distinction. Merlin's name in the field of behaviorism would equal Byron's among anthropologists. Already, at twenty-seven, Merlin had authored articles which won him the name of trail-blazer. He

**Heading by Joseph Eberle**

dared to interest himself in that new stuff known familiarly as "para-psych."

Merlin would look like his uncle at the same age; now his hair was a darkish brown, and his sun-tan blended into it. His eyes were bluer, more intense, and the angle of his black brows gave his face a whimsical difference.

He leaned down now, and whispered:

"We *aren't* rushing you, are we, Shalee? You did say you'd marry me, you know. You said it at last! Still, this show is a build-up for the electrified home —and it *was* a little like forcing household matters on you a bit prematurely—"

Shalimar could see the three of them in a hall mirror. She forced the corners of her mouth into a smile. Her face had worn for a moment the look she did not like.

It was—well, be frank!—a look of tragedy. And in Shalimar's life there had never been a tragedy, beyond the loss of her father and mother in a storm that capsized their little sail boat. And that had happened long ago, when she was ten. Since then, under Byron's guardianship—leave out her nightmares, and her life had been pure sunshine.

She was wearing a dark blue dress and a blue-sequined shell hat, and her dark, smooth bangs accentuated the size of her deep, dark eyes. Around her neck natural curls clustered, and the clear pink of her skin set off her sapphire ear clips. Now that she smiled, her image reassured her.

"I don't feel rushed, I just think maybe all my life I'll be a little bit mixed!" she breathed impulsively. "Uncle Byron used, you know, to have to wake me at night. And even yet, sometimes—but you know all that, you know me as well as if we were brother and sister. I still have that nightmare, you know, only I don't wake screaming!

"I wake—crying. When I was little it scared me—and as I've grown older, the dream has seemed to break my heart. Aren't I the kind of girl that might grow into a neurotic woman? And isn't that, maybe, why I had such a hard time making up my mind?"

"If you *have* made it up," Merlin said, on a sigh. "Once the knot is tied, though, I think I can relax. Suppose you *are* a bit of a dual personality? Who hasn't some kink?"

"You, Merlin, you haven't."

SHALIMAR was speaking out loud, now, although very low.

"If there were any *sense* to my crying-dream!" she went on impatiently. "Thick masses of

vegetation all around—that I can understand. It's India, of course."

"The dream," Merlin prompted, "is uneventful. In front of the jungle, then, a cleared space. Smoke, as though a big fire had burned itself out. A shelter built of branches, like a child's playhouse. And that's all! It shouldn't be impossible to live with a dream like *that*—"

He was not impatient. He was practical. And the side of her he was trying to reach, didn't respond to practicality.

She was whispering now, close in his ear:

"Merlin, tell me one thing. You offer me love. I know that. But *how* do you love me? Suppose—suppose, for instance, something parted us. Would you go looking for me, looking through countries and years and centuries, and no one else would do, you must find *me?* I think I need to know, Merlin—is that the way you feel about me?"

Merlin tried to smile, and frowned instead.

"I think that's the kind of thing you want to forget, Shalimar," he said gently. "That sort of thing is esoteric, introverted fantasy. I think men and women fall in love when they are right for each other. And if they lose each other—they needn't, unless one dies—then, I think the one left just goes on as well as he or she can, making the best of things."

Shalimar sat down lower in her seat.

Better to think about the electrical equipment show. Soon she'd be picking her own electrical equipment. Oh, wonderful not to have to smell house dust and get sneezy when you cleaned rooms!

The murmur of voices died. A suave young man began his speech.

The row of seats ahead had been vacant, but now three seats were filled by a large woman ablaze with purple, and her two unpleasant offspring. These were a girl in her teens, and a boy of about ten. The girl had a heavy face overlit by somber hazel eyes. The boy's face was thin, with sharp features. Meanness and cunning must have stamped it from the cradle—a thing which fortunately happens seldom, Shalimar thought. Think of the boy, she must; he immediately turned and fixed her with the kind of stare nice people discourage very young in children so inclined.

When the lights were lowered, his pale eyes were still on Shalimar's face.

The demonstration *was* pretty. Shalimar tried to see herself flipping down tumbler switches, making the dishes wash themselves, making dinner cook.

After awhile she grew tired; it seemed more natural to let servants do it. Why grudge a few rupees? . . . She caught herself, sharply. Well, after all, that was the way her mother had kept house.

Perhaps she made some uneasy gesture, because Byron murmured, "The interesting part is what follows, Shalimar. The dark light demonstration will be beautiful. Gadgets are wonderful, but new discoveries in radiant energy are soul-shaking."

Merlin spoke across Shalimar to his uncle.

"Dark light—and the new optical effects in photography. Recently I read a story in which two charming children, annoyed by their parents, misuse their wonderful nursery, which captures electrical impulses from the human brain and converts them into visible forms. These children create lions which come alive and eat their parents up. And I found myself wondering how far science may go—into what possibilities of thought materialization it may lead us—"

Shalimar thought, "Suppose that happened to *my* thoughts!"

Now it was Byron:

"If the old folklore came back to haunt the race in terms of its new science, it would be more disastrous than an atom bomb. In America would live again the medicine men, the shamans; in the west—out around our Colorado lodge, for instance, where the Aztec sun symbols are carved far from their known origins—the cults of human sacrifice; in the East, the sad white dream of witchcraft—"

"Stop it!" Merlin said suddenly.

But Shalimar thought the talk should have gone on. Not only *she* had secret fantasies; you must pick your way among them. Dreams haunted the human race, but the race progressed by selecting the good dreams and blocking out the evil.

That boy's eyes plunged into hers. They were chatoyant—lustrous, like a cat's.

PEOPLE gasped as the utter blackness hit them like a physical blow. And again, as pictures painted themselves on the walls in light. And yet again—because the "dark light" pictures seemed to float close, rather than to be visible only on the walls.

But the pictures were lovely. Roses, lilies; a flowering shrub—then a projection of waves on a white beach, and a pretty roadway stretching under arching trees.

More flowers, and then a pause. Someone said something had broken down. The blackness grew more oppressive.

Shalimar's eyes rested on the place where the panel mirror

was set in the wall. A faint opalescence marked the oblong.

Mistily blue, it became a window opening on deep space that filled all known dimensions, and others known only by vertigo. In the black room a woman stifled a scream.

The light hurt Shalimar's eyes, but she could not look away. And now a figure formed there, to draw into itself the blueness, to shine in darkly blinding blue. It was a woman's figure, nearly nude; but the outlines blurred and shifted and shimmered. The face was lovely—the face was cruel. It was cruelty personified—yet something in it drew you—

The figure flung out arms, and the light shimmered madder and bluer.

The being projected itself third-dimensionally forward. The face came close, the horrible arms outreaching—

Shalimar screamed.

HER head was on Merlin's breast, Byron was rubbing her wrists, the woman in front was staring, the horrible girl and boy were staring, people were saying things like—"She's all right!" and "She fainted—no wonder! I *nearly* did—"

She could walk, feeling only a little weak.

But the woman in purple and her boy and girl blocked their way, and the woman put a small white card into Shalimar's limp hand.

"I must speak to you," she said, like one under a compulsion. "Please—people will tell you I'm not a publicity-seeking mountebank. I have a strange gift, and—my boy Denny has it also. That frightening image can't have been part of the show. The wall mirror, I'm sure, acted as sometimes a crystal ball, or even a pool or a mirror *does* act—and showed a thing that wanted to manifest itself to someone here.

"She was, you know, the Hindu goddess Kali. The goddess of destruction. Did you see the necklace—the human skulls?"

They couldn't get by without physical pressure. The woman spoke faster.

"My boy Denny *felt* that something was seeking to contact the young lady. He had whispered to me.

"Please believe me, it isn't for the fee. It's—that I know I can get a message that concerns you!"

Her eyes were on Shalimar. "My card. Call me. Any time, at your convenience."

Shalimar's fingers closed on the white cardboard square.

"Madame Margoli—Medium" it said, with a telephone number.

SHE had feared the intrusion into her dreams of the goddess Kali. Under normal consciousness she felt the swelling tide of the subconscious, its upward thrust, its sucking withdrawal. The girl Shalimar felt the arms of Mother India drawing her back to lost memories.

The dream came upon her painfully, obsessively; for four nights she woke shaken by sobs, face wet with tears. The terror grew. The low streamers of black smoke, the pungent, oily smell; the utter dreary desolation of the clearing before the crowding jungle, the rag-tag miserableness of the rude, low shelter, roofed by broken branches on which leaves drooped dying. Tatters of coarse cloth hung like ruined pennants; they bound the crude structure together; they had been torn from her garments; for she wore rags in the dream—and the realization of this was a new thing. Once her own face stared up at her from the waters of a river. Her eyes, wide and dark and tragic. Her face, darker, but heart-shaped still—the darkness had the look of unwashed neglect and sun tan, and perhaps of different pigmentation as well.

Her hair drifted forward from the downbent head, and it was long and black, dishevelled, with the torn look of the cloth tatters that swung from the jointures of the shelter. As though she had "rent her tresses" in the ancient symbolic violence of grief and mourning!

It was on the fourth night that Shalimar saw herself like that. On the fifth, at last, came something new into the dream.

This new thing was simply the appearance of a face that was not her own, nor the face of anyone whom she had ever seen. It was the face of a man.

Its coming ended sorrow. Simply there was this man, this face—strong and brown, with sparkling dark eyes and white teeth shining a joyful greeting. In the dream the apparition had all the impact of a miracle, even a resurrection.

This face, this beloved head (wearing a turban!) was love. It was fruition. It was an end to sorrow and weeping, it was the sun in its glory, it was the conferring on a lonely, abandoned, deserted body of a soul. It was healing, it was life; and dirt and tears, rags and loneliness, shame and despair were nowhere in the universe. The moving finger had written lines too terrible to bear —but they had been erased.

"You live, beloved!"

Tender and poignant, the words hung on the air. Shalimar was awake in the moon-drenched light pouring in through the window, and somewhere a mocking bird sang in a tree.

Her own voice echoed in her ears—poignant and throbbing as she herself had never heard it. Yet neither words nor voice were hers; they belonged to the one who had evoked them from her dream-held lips. They belonged to the face that had been so near, so real, in the moment before waking.

NEXT afternoon Shalimar spoke to Byron and Merlin together. It was important that she be frank. Not to the point of speaking of the new longing in her heart, of her necessity. Not that; that was for her alone. But it was all linked together.

"I'm calling this Madame Margoli for an appointment," she said, ignoring the looks of concern on their two surprised faces. "I expect both of you think I am foolish. I've always discouraged anything that might develop my off-trail tendencies. But—I've been dreaming again, so regularly, so vividly. I can't rest until I find out—if the purple lady with the terrible children can see around the corner, rend the veil—whatever it is a medium does! I feel, for the first time, that it would be best to follow up that subconscious part of me that won't stay buried. Probably the seance, or whatever, will be merely a crude joke. It's something I must find out."

To her surprise, this was endorsed by a somewhat rueful Merlin.

"I wish all this didn't bother you," he said. "They say, you know, that a slide picture from a set made in India, showing statues of Hindu deities, got in by mistake. All the images seemed alive, floating in air, three-dimensional. I'll be honest with you, Shalimar; their explanation is probably authentic—and yet, they'd have to say something like that.

"The only other explanation which I might suggest would have to do with mass hypnosis and the projection of a thought image from somebody's mind.

"On the chance that such a thought image emanated from *your* mind, I think it may be as well to act on your impulse. Things buried are dangerous, things openly dealt with hardly ever. I'll make the appointment for you. I'd like to go—"

"I'd like both of you to come with me," Shalimar said at once, "if you will, please. If anything strange should happen—I'll want you to see for yourselves. If it's just a silly hoax—well, three heads are better than one, and of the three mine is the least scientifically trained, beside being the one—afflicted?"

It was Byron who tried to protest.

"It isn't being afflicted, Shali-

mar, to have super-perceptions. The most brilliant are the most perceptive.

"But I wish you wouldn't go, my dear. Remember the story you quoted, Merlin? The mind-created lions materialized and killed. I expressed a misgiving then, in which I was quite serious. Anthropologically speaking, whole races and cultures have been tyrannized by ideas that would have been better buried. So to cause hallucinations, perhaps. Better that, than to draw power from the coordinated powers of the mind.

"Disembodied nuclei of potency may drift through our strange universe, which James says we see only as a cave dweller sees shadows on the wall of his cave. To summon them forth is another thing. I am reminded of Saul and the witch of Endor. There was an edict, and it was direct and plain and very clear:

*" 'Call not their names!' "*

THEY presented themselves at Madame Margoli's home that evening at nine o'clock.

This house was in an old part of Georgetown. One in a brick row, it faced directly on the street—there would be a walled garden behind. The front windows were shuttered, as were those of most of these houses, for privacy and coolness. Street lights battled feebly under a dark arcade of over-arching trees; the heavy branches served to block out any breeze.

The house number showed black on the illuminated fanlight. As they stopped to make sure of it, a strange night bird cried raucously somewhere ahead of them and was answered by another from behind.

"Ugly kind of croak!" Merlin said distastefully. "Almost like a crow—if they flew at night."

The dark, hot street was a place to get out of. Shalimar's feet flew up the steps. Her finger pressed the bell as the two men overtook her.

The sad girl opened the door—tonight her greasy braids hung down beside her sallow cheeks.

"In here—please," she stammered, leading the way self-consciously.

"In here" was a narrow, long room with polished dark floor, white walls and lofty ceiling. There was little furniture, though an adjoining room showed rows of folding chairs. Wide windows and an open door gave on a balcony, and beyond that loomed the dark of the garden. Near the shuttered end of the front room a settee and three chairs were grouped around a table; on the table, black-velvet-draped, rested a large crystal ball.

The girl hesitated, seeming to

want to achieve some friendly, hostess-like gesture.

"My name is Dorcas," she said after awhile. "Make yourselves comfortable, will you? Mother will sit here behind the table. She will use the crystal ball. My brother Denny is going to try to get something at the same time. It seems to help mother. Sometimes they get the same thing at the same time, and it—well, it shows it's all authentic. I guess it reinforces things, too; strengthens the Forces, mother would say. Probably we'll see you before you go."

They sat around the table, Shalimar in the middle. Her eyes turned to the crystal ball. She half expected the scenery of the dismal dream to float into the curvilinear patches of light and darkness. The thing held your gaze, if you let it; you could hypnotize yourself with such a thing, she was sure. She had been frantic to try, somehow, to see the face that had come into the old, sad dream. But the crystal drowned her memory of it in a mystery of its own.

MADAME MARGOLI entered quietly. When she seated herself behind the crystal ball, Shalimar saw that the woman's face was drawn. Shalimar felt a quivering certainty that, after all, this visit would not leave her untouched. Something would happen in this dimlit room tonight.

"Before we begin, I must show you a newspaper clipping," Madame said.

She was wearing a loose, black hostess robe, which accentuated her pallor.

"Sometimes I find myself—almost afraid!" she confessed impulsively, drawing a clipped news column from a pocket as she spoke. "Read this. It was in the paper the day after the dark-light demonstration."

Shalimar held the bit of newsprint so that the three of them could read:

> ". . . after the crash landing at National Airport last night, three men were taken to Emergency Hospital and pronounced dead upon arrival. One was an East Indian, one a former New York gunman who had barely missed being excluded from re-entry into the United States, and the third, a passenger suffering from amnesia, returning from treatment in a French hospital. A few minutes after being pronounced dead, all three 'returned to life' and recovered with extraordinary rapidity.
>
> "An additional overtone of mystery is the fact that the two who were known to be naturalized Americans from other

countries immediately stated that they were fellow citizens and also friends and companions of the Indian gentleman. All three left the hospital together. Names are withheld at the request of the Indian, who has come to America for observation and study by arrangement with the State Department.

"The former gunman offered a prayer of gratitude to the Indian goddess Kali, in American vernacular—interspersed, says an attending physician, with East Indian phrases.

"Well! Well! Pennsylvania still suffers from hexing; a year or so ago, several witches were arrested in Panama. The United States has been plagued with subversives — is the Indian goddess Kali now seeking illegal entry? This deserves a full scale Congressional investigation."

"Very funny!" Byron muttered.

But a series of thumps from the back regions of the house prevented other comment.

"Denny is making the table rap," his mother said. "He gets marvellous results. I feel—the Forces—"

"Denny is ripe to be host to a poltergeist!"

Byron had spoken impulsively, and bowed an apology. Madame's eyes flashed cold fire, and an oddly impressive dignity came upon her.

"That has been said of my boy before, but it's a lie!" she retorted briefly. "Now I must ask for silence."

So they were hushed and still, in the big, dim room.

The crystal, some ten inches in diameter, showed a watery mingling of light and dark. It was like a large, unlidded eye, Shalimar thought. She stared into it, half in longing, half in fear. Yes, it might hypnotize one. But nothing happened, and somewhere the slow ticking of a clock gave way to its slower, deeper chiming.

Madame Margoli's hands clenched on the black velvet, and the knuckles whitened. Face upturned, she began to speak:

"There is a message for one here. My guides are silent. Yet I feel the presence of a Great Being.—I think it is she who deigned to show herself out of darkness five days past. I think this Great One wishes to reveal herself. Kali, I dare to call your name!"

*"No!"*

Byron half rose from his chair.

A change came over Madame Margoli. Her eyes stared blindly, raptly before her. Her body tensed and straightened, seeming to grow taller; her hands relaxed, then turned palms upward, the

fingers drooping slackly. She seemed no longer conscious of anything in the room. Only her voice swelled and soared.

"Kali! Great Kali!" she intoned; and it was like the peal of an organ. But in the back room pandemonium broke loose.

The thumping grew louder and then ceased, and the shrill voice of the boy Denny rang through the house, rough and sharp-edged like the barking of a dog.

Shalimar thought that he, too, called "Kali!"—then, that he had been seized by a fit which broke the complete articulation of the word, as instead he repeated: "Ali, Ali, Ali!"

Madame Margoli was dragged back from wherever she had been by her boy's voice. She closed her eyes painfully, and reopened them, looking at each of the three around the table in turn. She shuddered.

"He sounds sometimes—so nervous, so wild!" she said. "My little son. I think he is clowning, now. It makes the vibrations bad, he knows it does."

Denny appeared in the doorway, a gnome-like vehemence making every hair stand on end. His sister, large eyes awed, came and stood behind him.

"She'll tell you—Dorcas will!" the boy cried triumphantly. "We knew you were trying for Kali. We know about Kali. The table spelled her name—then it was just that other name—*Ali—Ali—Ali!* It's a man's name, better than a woman's, even a goddess. I'll bet there was an Ali who was a great guy, and I'll bet he came through. But first, the table spelled another word — three times. I wrote it down. B-H-I-L—that was it. *Bhil.* Mother, who was named Bhil?"

"Some Hindu worshipper in the spirit plane—trying to join us. Ali, too—"

Madame was speculating, trying to remember having heard the names.

"*'Bhil'* is not a name." Byron's voice was rough. "It's a word, and an ugly one. It means—oh, never mind. It had an historical association with the name Ali. I don't doubt the boy 'got something.' Something better left alone. Madame, if you have sense, you'll screen these things from him—"

THE screech of the two night birds sounded again, coming in through the open back windows and doors, and through the shutters. And immediately after, a shuffle of feet on the front steps. Then something heavy thudded against the door.

Merlin was first in the doorway. He helped into the house a man who was just being lifted upright by two pairs of hands.

"He went that way!" a coarse

voice said, panting. "We drove him off. The *huzoor* had already fallen—under the robber's attack. We were but a few paces behind."

A touch of Brooklynese in the voice went queerly with the way of speaking and the words. The speaker looked like a typical gangster, Shalimar thought; but his right arm still tenderly supported the other man who was just getting back his breath and raising his head, which had drooped forward at an odd angle.

This man now straightened and stood alone, and then stood looking at Shalimar. She drew back; seeking to hide what she knew must be shining in her eyes.

This was the face she had seen in her dream. The eyes—and now that the eyes had found hers clearly, the smile! The dark face—not so very dark; the pale duskiness of a high caste Hindu was on it. The strong, firm, open features.

This, she was able to think, was how the love of an Indian prince had come into the heart of the writer of the Indian Love Lyrics: The Temple Bells—Less Than the Dust—Kashmiri Song—Till I Wake.

'Lawrence Hope' was the pen name that woman took to hide her love; but when the days of gladness were run out she had died for her love, nevertheless. East and West—they never can meet, Kipling said.

But she, Shalimar, was no longer of the West.

Madame Margoli seemed ot be in a daze of her own. She was like a telephone wire that knows nothing of the miracle it conducts. She offered tea, and the sad girl Dorcas brought it in.

Yes, these were the three gentlemen who had been in the plane that crash-landed. The press had it wrong—they had recognized each other on the plane, although it was a fact that the smash had made their memories of that meeting quite vague. Only, thinking back, they knew it had been so—as they had known that one of the names of each was "Ali"—which was on none of their passports.

So they had decided to stick together. Sahib Kanoor planned to cross the continent—and without servants. Tony Rigotta knew the United States, and Carl Walker, who had suffered for awhile from amnesia, would benefit by joining them. Sahib Kanoor was in a sense their leader.

The scuffle at the door? Well, a would-be robber had caught Sahib Kanoor from behind around the neck and throat. His friends had driven him off.

Tony Ali Rigotta was worried about his teacup, saucer, spoon, and a little cake which he had

daringly accepted and couldn't find an extra hand for. Carl Ali Walker handled his tea and cake easily, but had little to say.

Kanoor talked with his lips to everyone, graciously, easily. Only to Shalimar, his eyes spoke.

"ELECTRIFIED Homes" invited everyone who had attended the August 1 benefit to a free three-dimensional showing of "Temple Glories from Foreign Lands." Apparently there had been telephone calls and letters of inquiry.

Merlin and Shalimar attended. Byron said, "I know what you'll see—and I'm feeling my age. And two's company, and three—"

He had, in fact, aged twenty years in half as many days, Shalimar thought. She had asked Merlin to release her at once, and he had told his uncle, and his uncle seemed weighed down not only by disappointment, but by a sense of disaster, which Shalimar resented. Pyar Kanoor was of a race alien to Byron and to Merlin; she did not feel it to be so. Pyar himself was not a man about whom one could imagine something sinister—as in all the stories about love from a stranger. Byron himself, she imagined, could see nothing but open hearted charm in this man who was no stranger to her heart. In fact he did not pretend to: "I think my misgivings are for him, as well as for you, Shalee, my darling child!"

Sitting again in the dark auditorium, Merlin and Shalimar watched a procession of temple scenes and shots of heathen idols. Among the last was one of Kali, her grotesque face, with tongue protruding. The skull necklace was impossible to miss. These draperies were not of mist, but, like the rest of the image, carved of wood or stone. The projection of the idol was startling; but it was just an ugly carved idol, after all.

People see what they expect. They went out talking, laughing a little, saying, "So *that* was what frightened us! We'll have to get used to this new projection. They say all the movies will have it—"

Merlin and Shalimar went for a drive, and then to dinner. It would be their last dinner together. Pyar and Shalimar had set their wedding date as soon as that. Their honeymoon was to begin next week.

"You'll let us hear from you from the Colorado lodge?"

"And all along the way!" she promised.

"It was a royal gesture that Byron insisted we make the Colorado place a stop. Where you and I—"

"Were to have gone," Merlin ended her broken sentence. "You are like his own daughter; it

gave him real comfort to have you still enjoy the place. It's lovely, Shalimar. The caretaker lives half a mile down the road with his little girl, and they'll 'do for you,' as they say out there. Since Kanoor doesn't want to drive through the Rockies—a sensible thing—and since, thank God, you aren't going to be saddled with the two Ali's—you'll have to go round by Green River, Utah, and into southwestern Colorado by bus.

"The Lodge is comfortable—almost luxurious; a pity we haven't all gone out there together. Till the last years, Byron took so many trips abroad. Now I expect he'll be going again."

"He looks so *tired*—" Shalimar began, stopping short. It was her fault. A week ago, Byron had been neither old nor tired.

"He wouldn't go for awhile," Merlin said quickly, and the opposing tide of resentment flooded her again. Oh, no, he wouldn't. He would wait to see if her marriage "took." He would wait to observe this meeting of East and West. Would he, actually, cherish a hope? Her road now was Pyar's road, his life was hers, his people. . . .

A soft, tender nostalgia claimed her and her soul knew peace. She could afford this gentle sorsow for all the old life. In an hour she would be in Pyar's arms.

PYAR and Shalimar sat hand in hand, watching the moon slide down the sky. He had parked his rented Packard, and they had climbed to the top of the hill. Beyond the river loomed the dark perpendicular of the Virginia palisades. The moon laid a quivering roadway of silver from the inverted crest of their reflection to where a tangle of branches netted and blotted it out.

"You are sister to the moon, 'Ah, Moon of my Delight!' " Pyar murmured after a silence. He stroked her hand, and then her arm. His fingers were cool and gentle, but to the girl they were as vibrant as though electricity coursed through his veins.

"Those words of a Persian poet have been made into an English song. Perhaps you know it," he said. " 'Ah, Moon of my Delight'—it might have been written for you. But the ending is sad:

" '. . . thou shalt look.
Through this same garden, after me—in vain!' "

"May we never be parted, Shalimar.

"I know that in the former life of yours which you remember, dreaming, you were my wife. When death took me, you were not *suttee*. In the dream that haunted you, you were, as such,

an outcast. It would not be expected now of you, you know; India is very different. But in the older time, not to be suttee was a fate worse than death. Something stopped you; as in a story of an ancestor of mine. You know that sometimes the soul of a man returns in the person of a descendant."

The story he told might have frightened her, but for his arm around her. He was traveling incognito, although of course the State Department knew that he was a prince of Bengal. Some two hundred years ago, a prince of his line had belonged to the ancient order of Thugs—many of of the highest, as well as the lowest, had so served the goddess of death.

"No Westerner would ever understand. Yet, without death, there could be no birth!" he interjected. "Think of a world ever more populated, without the gift of death! 'No man dies but by the will of God—' that is one of the basic beliefs of the true Hindu; it was the great apologetic, one might say, of the followers of Kali. Not any more, my little flower; it is all so different now—as different as the Christian life of your country differs from the witch days of old New England. I have read eagerly of every land, and countries, like men's souls, show similar patterns of evolution.

"Well, my ancestor followed Kali. He took the long road with the Thugs, and partook with them of Kali's sacred sugar, and —yes, they killed! Buried their victims, took their treasure—Oh, it has all passed away like an evil dream. But there is no doubt my ancestor practised Thuggee with his band, like it as little as I may, until—

"He married. It was in the days of the English rule, and the highborn girl he loved had studied at a British mission. She would not have married him, prince though he was, had she known of this association of his; she was a product of two worlds, two beliefs, and she had not been baptized into the new faith—yet her mind was very open to it. To the unfortunate young wife, ritualistic killing was what the British called it—murder.

"She learned of the activities of her husband's band, and she did not betray them. But when they found out that she knew, they demanded her death of her young husband. His should be the hand—"

Again Pyar paused, then forced himself to continue.

"He refused. And it was he the Thugs slew, in sacrificial manner. They thought to dispose of the girl by suttee. They found her reluctant in this, and their scorn was boundless. Driven by motives of contempt and the

need for self-protection, they took the young wife. She was carried swathed in cloths and gagged. They carried her swiftly in the early dark of the evening to the pyre they had built in a clearing before the jungle—

"She was rescued by a young Englishman. He had admired the girl—or maybe he had known and loved her. Anyway, he had been watching over her, and he raised an alarm and led a rescue party.

"The Thugs scattered and were lost in the endless windings of the old Indian roads they knew so well. But the girl-wife—she waited, it was said, in a crude shelter built of branches; until death released her.

"She lived, but not for long. A year or two. Long enough, perhaps, to shut a gate against her—the gate she might have passed through at once to overtake her husband's soul."

SHALIMAR knew, vaguely, of the former cult of Thuggee. She thought the comparison Pyar had made of it with the old New England days of witchraft fair enough. She passed it by for the more personal story.

"Love should be a thing without end," she said. "You really believe, Pyar—"

"That our paths, after centuries of waiting, have been permitted to cross again!" he said eagerly, his face lighting up with the smile she adored.

"Don't let India frighten you, my little love! It is all so different now. Your happiness is more to me than anything I have. We will travel, see the world together. To me it will be new again. India is becoming very different. We are fostering the sciences. The recent rulers of my house have worked against the caste system. My father was devoted to Ghandi's teachings. Of course, there is still much in India to shock and alarm you—but by my side you will not see what your eyes should not—I swear it.

"There was the recent news item in your American papers, about the rich Indian woman, ruler of a palace and estates, who had a thirteen-year old slave girl whipped to death. Although the *chabouk,* the whip, is seldom now so used, I have no doubt it happened. But that woman is not true to the new spirit of India, which you shall know and love.

"My palace will be a setting for the jewel I will bring to it. I haven't described it to you, have I, little rose? Ah, I was coming to that—"

Far below on the road where cars whirled smooth and silent like big glow worms, one stopped behind Pyar's parked car. Three figures tumbled out, and a shrill

boy's voice cried: "That's it, that's it! A Packard, and the license— I know the number as well as you do!"

Pyar's arm dropped from Shalimar's waist, and he stood, pulling her to her feet. Good-humoredly he grumbled:

"They are like watch dogs! Ever since that *dacoit* attacked me on the boy's front porch, to which undoubtedly I was led to find you—they have constituted themselves my guardians! They'll watch over you also, beloved—and they've recruited the *chokra.* Not his mother, the Memsahib Margoli, but her young son, claims constantly to get messages from Kali. It is not good for the boy; but the night under the sky is good, the race in a car down the long road is good—I suppose there is no harm in any of it. Only, I have read of the unbalanced young who invite a thing called *poltergeist*—a rough mischievous spirit, a thing most unlike the spirit of the Dark Mother. Sometimes I feel he will anger her and bring us trouble!"

"You still — believe in — Kali?"

For the first time something of darkness and chill seemed to touch Shalimar's spirit.

"The old terrors are long passed. But all Hindus honor their gods—" Pyar was beginning, when the three leaped up the slope and joined them.

"We are not pleased by the intrusion, Tony!"

It was prince and leader who reproved the first of the three who followed him so worshipfully, and a queer exultation rose in the worried girl and sent away the nagging little uneasiness.

"I was about to describe my palace in Bengal. All of you shall see it. Yes, even you, *chokra* Denny—if your mother will spare you for a visit. Each time I try to tell my affianced one of it, you come upon us and our private talk is broken. If it were not that we two go on our bridal trip so soon, I would see that you learned a lesson. A matter of days—"

Shalimar was remembering with pleasure the old Indian words—the young lad, the chokra!—when Denny interrupted.

"Don't take her, Mr. Kanoor!" he cried. "The ouija spoke of her too. It was some sort of warning. It said she is *beetoo.* B-E-E-T-O-O. Is that a word you know? It sounded—well, not good."

The moon dipped with what seemed an impossible suddenness behind the black wooded line of the opposing palisade. The stars were out, but they were dim and cold and far away.

*Beetoo.* It was not one of the words Shalimar remembered. It dropped heavily into silence as

that other queer word the boy Denny had dredged up from the depths of his subconscious—or from some table-tilted communication, as really seemed more likely—had dropped into silence. B-H-I-L, Denny had spelled. *Bhil.* Byron had been disturbed by *that.* Byron, who had been everywhere, read everything, had known the word. He had said, "It is an ugly word," and that was all. He had said that Shalimar would not know it.

Nor did she, nor the word Beetoo. But she shivered as Pyar led her, now himself fallen into silence, down the steep path.

THERE were, of course, difficulties. Through his legation, Pyar arranged the Hindu marriage, and Shalimar had persuaded her old rector to officiate at a Christian service. Since she felt that she had belonged to Pyar from a time before conscious memory, she told herself that they were triply married.

It was over at last, and they could go away together.

They took the bus from Denver on a bright August morning, and checked in for one night in Green River, in a comfortable little hotel with a delightful landlady who talked enough to make them welcome and afterward left them alone.

In the evening they walked along the highway street of the small town on the desert edge. Sharp and fantastically pink as mountains on the moon, the rocky rampart that surrounded half the little town faded and showed ghostlike against the violet sky.

"This is a happy place!" Shalimar murmured. And then, "I was so glad your two friends and their horrible little disciple Denny left town a week before we did. I enjoyed our marriages—both of them—far more, without them. I hope their boy scout-camping and touring trip took them north, or south—anywhere but west. They won't turn up out here?"

"I gave my orders!" Pyar said with that occasional sternness Shalimar loved. "They had disturbed us too often. I made my wish clear. The change of plan was because of my marriage; how could they not accept it?"

The air was a sweet wine that chilled swiftly after sunset. They hurried, laughing now and then at nothing, back to their hotel. They were surprised to find it crowded.

In the lobby a group of Green River citizens were gathered, discussing something with the pleasant landlady. When Pyar and Shalimar entered, the talking broke off too sharply. Then, as the two passed with quickened steps toward the stairway, the

friendly Mrs. Gibbs came impulsively to meet them.

"Maybe I should warn you two," she said. "We don't want out-of-town people to think Green River is a dangerous town, because it's not. Our people who live here are good people, all of them! But—on one of our few side streets, the sheriff came across a frightful thing just now. And if two men were not safe on our streets tonight, a man and his wife might not be. So I must tell you—"

She sounded like a record running down; and after all, she had told them nothing.

Shalimar felt the already known and dear comfort of Pyar's hand on her arm, the slight tensing of those delicate long fingers. And it was he who prompted Mrs. Gibbs, with just the right tone of authority, to which the tall uniformed man with a two-gunned holster nodded approvingly.

"So you will tell us—Mrs. Gibbs? On the side street, your sheriff found—"

"Two corpses, Mr. Kanoor. They had their necks broken. Mr. Green, our sheriff, says they were—garrotted. Never before, in all my twenty years here—"

Her voice broke.

Shalimar felt a wild trembling seize her. Pyar's voice was rough.

"And what else, Mrs. Gibbs? Mrs. Gibbs! Were the men robbed? Were there no clues? Did your authorities know of no *dacoit* bands—armed gangs, I mean?"

It was the sheriff who answered this.

"Why yes, sir, they were robbed. At least neither of them had billfolds, and they looked like prosperous men, who naturally would carry some money on them. We don't know yet where they came from. It looks as though they were picked up somewhere else, and brought here and murdered. Of course the victims will be identified. The murderers? That may take time. I'd say—there were no clues. A silver half dollar was lying in the dust. That's all."

THEY had, that enchanted sunset of an hour ago, spoken of stopping over here for a few days. The feeling was gone from them now. When the lovers were alone they spoke no more of their ugly welcome to the West, but their joy was tarnished. They loved no less; but it was as though a note of doom had sounded through a lovely rhapsody.

They did not speak of the gruesome incident, but Pyar quoted from his favorite Persian poet, choosing the lines:

"The moving finger writes;
and having writ,

Moves on; nor all thy piety
nor wit
Shall have it back to cancel
off a line,
Nor all thy tears wash out a
word of it."

Shalimar remembered saying those lines to herself, immediately after her dream of Pyar; she had told herself that it was as though an awful writing of doom had been erased by the sight of his face. She sensed that their ugly greeting here where they had come for happiness had somehow struck deeply at something mystic in her husband which lay deeper than even she could understand. And she set herself to recreate their happiness, most of all his.

When at last they slept, the passing of trains thundered through her dreams; but there was, too, the singing of a bird that sounded like the eastern mockingbirds. This made Shalimar wake, at last, with tears on her lashes. She was not homesick! Where Pyar was, was home. But the bird had seemed to sing of a beauty too great to be borne, because it couldn't last.

Straining her eyes to see Pyar's face in the early dawnlight, she was amazed to see a moisture about his closed lids that matched her own. Deep in sleep, even a man born to rule the lives of other men might weep.

She curled close against him, cautiously, so as not to waken him.

THE lodge was as she had imagined it.

There was the huge living room paneled in pine, the enormous graystone fireplace. Navajo rugs on the floor, and even on one wall. Deep, welcoming chairs and divans. Mountain and desert pictures.

And across the highway that cut by too close in front there was rolling terrain, arroyo carved, bespeckled with sagebrush; off southward lay a maplike extent of wheat fields broken with green checkerboard squares that were beans. These, too, belonged to the Caliver family, and yielded an income. Half a mile down in that direction a smaller white painted house stood farther back from the road, and there lived Hiram Weldon, a Mormon widower, with his thirteen-year old daughter Sarah. They were very blond in a dusty way that matched the country. Hiram hired migratory Indian help to work the Calivers' fields and his smaller plots. Hiram and Sarah were to "do for" the Kanoors.

"As if we needed them!" Shalimar protested. "I *can* cook a little—"

"If it made you happier, my darling—" Pyar began, with a slight frown. "But I hope it will

not. I think you should have servants. You must remember that in India—"

Shalimar did remember.

"Hiram is the silent kind—though I doubt he does much thinking!" she offered, following her thoughts out loud. "Sarah, too. A good child with no horrible subtleties about her. People with plain, ordinary backgrounds. Comfortable people!"

Pyar was making her hair curl around his finger. "Don't you forget that not too many years ago, there were blood-feuds in this western country? One made an enemy, and one night—Zing! The blade of the knife bit as deep as a Sikh kirpan."

Shalimar laughed.

"You know too much about our historical weaknesses!" she told him. "You tempt me to turn the tables on you. By degrees, I've remembered that I knew a little—a very little—about your ancient Thugs. The *rumal*—that was what they strangled with. Here, you know, such a thing is unknown; it's not a regular way of killing. And certainly not a religion. They call a similar approach *yoking,* in our crime-ridden cities, but it's not at all the same. I think someone tried that on you, the evening your knights errant saved you at Madame Margoli's door. Anyhow, it was religion with them, as you told me yourself. They used a silver coin to weight the rumal—they ate sugar in the name of Kali—"

Pyar's hand flashed down with a terrifying suddenness upon Shalimar's mouth. His face whitened, and in it was something like anguish. Then his fingers dropped away, and he drew her head down tenderly to his breast.

"Never say that name!" he entreated.

There was a soft tapping at the door, and the two sprang apart. Sarah came in at odd times and their caresses were not for other eyes.

Pyar crossed to the door, as Shalimar said softly, to reassure him:

"It was only that you had spoken of it so freely before. Byron said something like you've just said, Pyar. 'Call not their names. . . .' "

"Your guardian was right," Pyar said stiffly, as he opened the door.

But it was not Sarah who stood there, but Hiram. And Shalimar read in his eyes, stolid though they were, that through the glass top of the door he had seen Pyar's hand across her mouth. She felt herself redden.

But he only handed in a parcel, and said briefly:

"Sarah said you wanted extra milk, and she forgot to bring it. You've been here near two

weeks, and she's done extra errands, and now after dark I'd better. So long as things have been going on in the village as they have."

"*What* things?" Shalimar demanded. But the door closed behind him.

"Tomorrow we will find out," Pyar promised.

THEY depended on Hiram for rides into West Bluff, and on the next day he made excuses. Pyar's dark brows came together as they did when he was angry, and he dismissed the subject curtly.

Shalimar, insistently anxious, refused to be silenced, and demanded some definite information.

"It's not for me to tell you folks that the town people are half crazy, and since they don't know who to blame, trust no one but themselves," Hiram told her. "It's just that them they don't know, they can't be sure about."

Shalimar felt the moisture in the palms of her hands.

"I expect you to tell us more than that, Hiram," she said. "If something terrible is lurking around the town, we aren't far from it. If the people out here are so silly and ignorant that they want to involve innocent strangers here on a quiet honeymoon—people who haven't even a car of their own, two people who have kept entirely to themselves as Mr. Kanoor and I have done—well, what they think isn't worth the bother of knowing. Just the same, if they are in danger in West Bluff, we two alone here may be in far more danger. As we came through Green River, two men were found murdered in the town. If it's anything of that sort—"

Hiram turned his dusty, wide-brimmed hat around in big awkward fingers.

"Just so, ma'am," he said slowly. "Just so. As you people came through Green River, two men were found dead there. Circumstances of their death weren't like anything ever seen in these parts before. West Bluff knows all that, ma'am. Well, West Bluff has found no corpses; but people have been disappearing, these past two weeks. And no strangers seem to be around West Bluff at all; not even a strange car. A whole family disappeared, a picnicking family, the Rountrees. Their car was found down an arroyo trail where people sometimes go. The Rountrees were gone, every one of them. Nate and Bella, and their three kids—the youngest a little girl only five years old. Before that, a young fellow named Sam Sloane—he turned up missing first.

"I've took up for you people, and I've had to do it. Last night,

though, I looked through the doorglass, and it seemed to me like your husband here was a bit rough with you, ma'am. So—Mr. Caliver asked me to do fer you, and I'm still doin'. My Sarah can still come over daytimes, for I don't myself believe no harm of either of you: you especially, ma'am, being a woman and gentle, and Mr. Byron Caliver's niece or ward or whatever.

"If you need help, ma'am—"

He seemed trying for more words, not finding them. With his usual "See you around!" he walked out of the kitchen, through the front yard and down the road.

Shalimar found herself shivering in the noonday heat. Terror was all around, in the glare of the sunlight, in the black shadows of the cottonwood trees.

She knew a violent, protective surge of emotion for her husband.

He was a stranger in America. It had welcomed him with one of its ugliest manifestations. Some crazy pervert, or a band of perverts; a gang wandered from some city—escaping a crime wave grown too "hot!" And these local yokels turned on Pyar, because he was alien in race, native of a country they knew nothing about!

She saw a somberness in his face that kindled her resentment to fever pitch.

"Pyar—" she hated to say it! They had planned their honeymoon so joyously. "Can we go east—at once? I don't want to stay here."

His brow lightened.

"You are wise, Shalimar. There isn't another bus, you know, until tomorrow. Yes, we will leave in the morning. Tonight, I will be glad of the rifles on the wall. I am a good shot, you know, I have shot often in the jungle. I think I would prefer a jungle to the wide emptiness all the way to those far mountains. Nevertheless, you are not to worry."

THE day passed somehow. Their little packing done, there was nothing to do and little to say. Only when it was evening, when the lights were lit and a fire blazed for the last time in the mighty fireplace, Shalimar felt comforted. They sat as they like to sit, in one big chair before the fire, and the lamplight and firelight seemed to raise a wall around them. It was a little moment too bright for time to dim.

"Always we have been interrupted, when I have started to tell you of my palace—" Pyar said. "This, now is our time for that. You shall see it as I tell you, Shalimar; for words are but

vibrations, and so are thoughts, and so, even is the material world—yes, even the strong walls of the palace itself. And so I create it tonight for you."

She listened, seeming to see domes and minarets and walls of alabaster, and the secret forbidden gardens around them.

"The central hall is sixty feet high, pillared and balconied, and on the balcony a grill covered with gold conceals the long hall on which open doors to many apartments," he was saying. "In the great dining apartment stands a table four feet wide and forty feet long, and the top is all of glass. Under it, but a little narrower, runs a pool with floating lilies and golden fish darting. In my father's day, beautiful dancers were placed in the pool to swim in graceful patterns and divert the guests—but the custom has been discontinued—"

Laughter bubbled from Shalimar's lips. He looked so like a little boy who wanted her to know that he was good, not overfond of sweets—

The laughter checked, and the words, and they were a man and a woman sitting close together, tense, rigidly listening. And yet, neither of them knew what soft, unexpected sound had startled them.

Then both of them heard footsteps on the porch, and both of them heard the raucous cry of a bird and an answer from the other side of the house. They slipped to their feet.

Pyar reached the rifle on the wall with three strides, and lifted it down, and then he went to the door and threw it open. And outside, lit by the light of their lamps and the hearth, three faces they knew stared in at them.

Tony "Ali" Rigotta's face wore a grin. Carl "Ali" Walker's was emotionless. But the boy Denny looked white in the mellow mingled glow.

"We have come for you, Brother Ali!" Tony said. "These parts have turned dangerous, worse than the cities. You need us by you, Jemadar; your feet might stray into danger!"

Incredibly, Pyar made no objection.

He laid the rifle down and walked into the dark. Denny made a sudden dive toward Shalimar, who stood quite still. Carl "Ali" snatched the boy back. "With us, *chokra!*" he said in his dull-toned voice, and the boy cringed and obeyed like a dog.

Shalimar went on standing still; she caught Pyar's backflung words:

"Until — after awhile, my Shalimar! Try not to fear."

*Try not to fear!* She knew now in her heart, not knowing how she knew, who had done the garrotting in Green River. She

knew who had caused a whole family in West Bluff to disappear. And she realized that Hiram would have no inclination to drop in on a friendly errand tonight.

She knew, too, that between these men and Pyar there was a certain bond. Yet—he loved her. He was gentle, good and kind—not evil.

He had not taken the rifle, but it would have made little difference against the two "Alis" and Denny.

When he had stopped her speaking of the Thugs, she had been about to tell him that among the things she had remembered was this: the members of Thuggee had all called themselves by that name, had greeted each other as "Brother Ali" in a sort of secret code. The thugs had simply added "Ali" to their other names—as had Tony and Carl.

Her breath was coming hard, now, and inaction became unendurable.

SHE slipped out into the chill of night here near the roof of the continent. The highway was empty; sometimes it was empty for hours, between spurts of roaring cars. A rise of ground blocked out the light in the Weldon home.

She walked to the north end of the porch, which afforded a view of the back yard and outhouses; the clutter of buildings nestled in a little grove of cottonwood trees had never attracted Shalimar's interest. Now she stood staring at the barn, which was an old and unused building in bad repair.

It was not empty now. Rays of dim light struggled through cracks in the warped framework. She thought it imperative that she go as near to the barn as she dare. Before she ran down the road to the Weldon's house to throw herself on the mercy Hiram had grudgingly extended. But she must see, first; one of those cracks might serve as a peephole. And the sound of voices should be audible outside the crazy, warped old structure.

When she was halfway to the barn she remembered her dark, hooded rain cloak hanging in one of the closets. It would have hidden her, even her face; but she would not go back for it. Not self preservation drove her, but terror for Pyar. Whatever this horror was, he had wanted no part of it. Whatever it was, he was in danger. And a canny remnant of logic told her that Hiram would not come back with her, unless she had something specific to tell him. He would take no interest in a meeting between her husband and two men with whom he had gone willingly. She was not good

at lying, and she could think of nothing that would serve her purpose but the truth. She must find out the truth, and then she could make Hiram come back with her.

She felt pitifully vulnerable as she crept up to the largest crack in the wall of the old barn. Her dress was a pale blue that looked white in the starlight. Her legs were white and bare. Then her eyes focused on the scene in the interior of the barn, and she might have been a disembodied spirit—so completely did she forget herself.

Candles stood on the four corners of a sheet spread out on the barn floor. A short-handled pick axe lay on the sheet; toward the center, brownish lumps.

"Let us see you take the sugar. Let us see you eat the sweetness of Kali!" Tony Ali said. But the voice was not like the voice of Tony Ali. The Brooklynese had quite gone from it. It was deep and sonorous, now.

Then Carl Ali spoke, and the flatness had left his voice. It was as though he came more fully alive. But the aliveness was an ugly thing. There was a glitter in his eyes, a fanaticism, a hungry longing; and she knew that the longing was—to kill.

The boy Denny cringed, now hiding his eyes and again staring before him. The men ignored him.

Shalimar's eyes sought her husband's face. If it showed that horrible change, that mad glitter of evil, she felt that she would go mad. It did not; but there was that in it which brought her no comfort.

Slowly Pyar accepted a lump of the brown sugar and placed it on his tongue.

"I do not turn from our gods," he said. "But I have told you the days of blood sacrifice are gone, and it is so. I have told you the old customs have passed from our land, and have never belonged to this new one. I have come with you willingly, to know what you want of me."

"You had little choice," said Carl Ali, "against two servants of Kali. And even the little cur, the *chokra,* is obedient. He is a digger of note!"

Pyar's voice answered.

"You have dared this thing? You have found your *bhil,* your killing place? You have made live again the whole accursed ritual—"

"Have care, false Jemadar! Our work has been done at night, here on your place, behind this barn—wherein twice we have lain down and slept! We have killed according to the law of Kali. The pit was dug by the little one, not large, since bodies broken at the joints need little space. Behind your barn you may see the log and the hammer

where the breaking was done, and you may see the sharp stake which was driven through the dead *beetoos.* In fact you may see more by a little scraping, for the little digger was easily exhausted, and the pit is shallow. Yet all are in it; the young man, and the man with his wife and their three children. A poverty stricken party these last, whom we induced to join us in a better picnic place! Not like the men in Green River, who carried considerable wealth.

"Jemadar, when the pit is discovered, due to shallow digging, the credit will be yours. We are not known in the little town down there; only once we entered the small store, to buy many pounds of butter against a need, which are in our car hidden in a gully."

SHALIMAR'S trance of horror was pierced by the anguish in Pyar's outcry—which was to her utterly inexplicable, since it concerned the one harmless detail in the horrible narration. Pyar cried: *"Butter!* No, in Kali's name!"

Tony Rigotta seemed to start and stare, and there was a kind of awed rapture in his voice.

"*You* called on her, Jemadar! It is not too late for you. The dark goddess of the air shows herself! *Kali-Pyar,* you are still her beloved!"

Pyar meant "beloved." The name had come straight down in his family—

Thought left Shalimar then. Her eyes followed the eyes of the four in the barn.

The waning moon was making its late rising, and its pallid light sifted into the old barn through a window high up under the roof. Dust motes whirled in the dual light of moon and flickering candles; and they coalesced and shifted slowly, until imagination could mold a central figure with multi-numbered limbs.

Was it imagination?

Her husband's voice brought her back to reality. The moonlight struggled against the candle light, the motes whirled dustily, the vision was gone. But her husband's voice was dream-held, with no will in it.

"What do you want of me?" it asked, tonelessly; and Carl Ali answered.

"Your hand must kill the *beetoo,* the outsider. Even though she is your wife, your hand must kill her. Kali has spoken. You know the law."

"You bought many pounds of butter. Why, then?"

"If you refused to obey. If you were false, Jemadar. We would strangle you. The butter has been melted in a large can. It is nearly *ghi.* Wood, taken at night from a lumber yard, has

been piled down the arroyo there. Your hand will be more merciful than the flame, and you would live to serve Kali. There is room in the lonely places for her cult to rise again. Here are long roads—and lonely travellers, and many with money."

"I find all this impossible to believe," Pyar said slowly. "These things, in our day, are not. You make them live again, and these are troubled times, and such breed strange happenings. Yet I cannot be sure these are not empty words. A cruel game?"

"We have thought of that, Jemadar," Tony Ali said. "It was another reason for permitting the shallow burial. Come—you shall see."

Shalimar turned to run, as an animal runs in terror. But she was not an animal, with its instinct and its strength. Her legs turned to butter, she thought; to butter—which has become a horrible thing! She held herself upright by leaning against the barn.

The three men and the boy came out, and she was there in her pale blue dress, with her white legs and arms which she could see and her white face which they could see but she could not.

They walked toward her together. Then Pyar's arm supported her. She knew that there was nothing he could say to her now—nothing at all.

They walked around the barn and Tony Ali gave Denny an order.

"Dig! Not far, you know. You barely covered them."

There was a spade. The boy took it and set it into the ground. Once—twice. Three times. And the thing was seen.

Something like a broken white stick, that seemed to reach up to be seen in the moonlight. And a small arm and hand protruding from red rags that had been clothing.

Shalimar fainted.

SHE had escaped from a cold hell of horror. Warm fingers of light caressed here eyelids. She opened her eyes, and the walls of the room where she had known happiness were around her.

She sat up, Pyar's name on her lips. Then she saw him.

He was very still and very far away. This was a long room, and he lay on his back on the floor at the end toward the kitchen hallway. She was on the divan with the woven Navajo robe. She pressed her hands against her eyes, to rub away the pain. When she took them down again, she saw that the three others had come in from the kitchen; silently they stood looking at her.

"His own hand sheathed the knife in his heart," Tony Ali said. "It was not fit that he should lie outside with the dead *beetoos,* the outsiders. The struggle was too great for the Jemadar. Either he must kill you, or let us kill him for a traitor. Or perhaps it was that, though he thought to renounce Kali, his heart would not let him. He had acknowledged to us that he knew himself reincarnated from the former Thug leader in his line; he had acknowledged us as former comrades and followers. But in this present life he had grown soft. Yet he chose an honorable death."

Shalimar tried to speak, to think.

Carl Ali had drawn a large white handkerchief from his pocket, and in one hand he held a silver dollar. He played with the two, half knotting the dollar in the handkerchief.

Tony Ali spoke again.

"My Brother Ali is impatient to make an end, Memsahib!" he said. "The silver coin in the kerchief, or *rumal*—such is the death ordained for the *beetoo.* And you are *beetoo,* Memsahib!"

"Also—she knows too much to live!" Carl Ali interrupted.

"That is true. But also, there is the place deep in the arroyo," Tony Ali reminded. "The log pile we laboriously carried, and the *ghi*—the butter?"

Carl's hands lowered slowly, and a brighter look of interest crossed his heavy features. He might have been a sullen child diverted by a new toy.

"I have not seen such a burning, and she will be living!" he said. "Still—"

Tony resumed:

"It is in my mind to give you choice, because you were a true wife to him who should have been our chief. Because he laughed at the old things, I nearly let Carl Ali strangle him on the doorstep, that first night when we all met—then because I loved him, I insisted on trying him again and again—believing he would at last be one with us!" Tony said, "He trusted us when we said another, following, had seized him. Now, it is in my mind to allow you choice between the rumal and the *ghat*—the pyre of burning.

"The rumal is a swift death. Your neck breaks, you understand."

Carl Ali stepped forward, and it was like the advance of a Frankenstein monster. His great hands rose again, putting together silver coin and white cloth.

But an instinctive response of horror and fury drove Shalimar to her feet, and something in that fury stopped the big man with the look of an idiot lost in a vicious dream.

"It doesn't matter!" she cried, and realized that her voice had risen to a shriek. "You're going to kill me, and I don't care how."

"Yet—" Tony shook his head, impatiently, tossing back a long black lock, staring at her. "When you looked at me, just now, I saw a strange thing. You had seemed—a silly girl, soft, like all women. Then a dark strength came into your face. . . . When you looked your hate at me—you looked as I have thought that Kali must look."

Denny had been out of Shalimar's thoughts, beneath her notice. He was to her a pawn, trapped into a horrible companionship, a thing of little significance. Now he flung himself forward, crying in a voice that showed the break of adolescence:

"You mustn't look like that, Miss Shalimar! Not *you* . . ."

Carl took one step and made one violent motion with his huge hand and heavy arm, and Denny fell inertly to the floor.

"So it remains to decide about the widow of Pyar!" Tony resumed after a moment. But his voice was different; uncertain, faltering, and for a while he said no more.

Shalimar waited. There was no hurry. The long night lay ahead of them. Time enough for any kind of death. But the cavern of the fireplace began to have a strange fascination for her. She felt a compulsion to watch the struggling flames of the dying fire; the smoke that seemed held in the chimney by a downdraft; that formed a whirling blue pillar, and that sent out streamers into the room.

"Kali manifested in *blue,* didn't she?" she heard herself saying. "Look, there in the fireplace! I didn't quite believe in the thing that scared us that day when the strange projection was shown. Mass hysteria, I thought. I believed I was half out of my mind, when I seemed to see—up in the moonlight, in the barn—

"Whatever you do to me, I'm no longer afraid. And there's been so much horror, I seem to have come out on the other side. I think I am ready to die. But—the smoke where it gathers is bluer and bluer, and the arms it puts out—why, now they have fingers! And the face—it isn't all horror, is it? There's a dark, awful sweetness in the face—"

"Like a woman who loves death because death is beautiful. Or—like a woman who goes to join her husband on a funeral pyre," Tony Ali said softly.

And yet he made no move.

There was a clock in the kitchen, and Shalimar could hear it tick.

She dragged her gaze from the blue smoke, and looked earnestly in turn at the two men. If she had changed, so had they.

Carl Walker said, looking awkwardly from Shalimar to Tony Rigotta:

"It isn't any good, without the kid—is it?"

"No!" Tony answered. And he began talking to Shalimar fast and earnestly as though he must make her understand him, and as though he were also himself trying to understand a thing that puzzled him. He spoke with a new, awkward formality in which the Brooklynese accent strengthened and grew:

"When I came to in the hospital, I had dual memories—my thinking was double, like the things you see when you drink a mickey. First I remembered walking a long road, one of a band of turbaned men—and I remembered Kanoor, who was our leader. I remembered places in India: Delhi—Lahore—and little Indian villages. Then I would remember Brooklyn and New York, and places in America and Italy.

"The Indian memories fitted in with Kanoor's talk, and later with Denny's, and more and more nothing else mattered. And with Carl it was even more so, because of the amnesia he had before he—died.

"So we all understood that we had died in the plane crash, and that Kali who rules the air had thrust into our bodies older souls, and that we, now, were these older souls, and belonged to Kali as we had in an earlier time.

"Pyar had talked to the doctors, and he could explain the dual memories—which he did not fully share, because he was the reincarnation of his own ancestor, and had the same racial memories, and was more one person. But according to the doctors, our bodies were dead only minutes, and the brain cells were not greatly damaged; and Kanoor said those same brain cells had stored in them the memories that belonged to them.

"Then we got thick with Denny. And you know what? Funny, the stuff that kid had collected in the attic where he kept all kinds of crazy things. Had a mess of water moccasin eggs hatching, and two black widow spiders in a bottle. And books—books—books. Neither Carl nor I had done much reading. We didn't know how fascinating books could be.

"The kid had all this torture stuff, and gang war stuff, and some of that was authentic—I could recognize it was. Then he had stuff about primitive tribes—African Voo-Doo, American Indian medicine man stuff—and this old East Indian business about the Thugs, the Deceivers. After a while we didn't know what part we were learning, or what we were remembering.

After we killed the men at Green River sometimes Denny would get the horrors; yet he would always tell us that he was closer to Kali than any of us. He was what his mother called a *focal point*—spirits and forces 'came through' him.

"Now—something has happened to me. Something that scares me! When Denny was knocked out, I felt myself suddenly fall apart. Those brain cells that didn't die—they seem to be telling me what I am and what to do—but it is as though I am crippled and only half knowing.

"Something beautiful and terrible, and a wildness in me that didn't care, is gone. I'm half in myself and half out, and I could go screwy and half-witted like Carl here—"

"You go on like that, and I kill you next after the girl," Carl said heavily. "Either you can kill like Denny helped us remember, or like the gangster you were before you died in the plane. *And stop talking!*"

SOMETHING shook the lodge, as though every particle of air was disturbed by a wind that moved no object; as though an earthquake rattled no picture on the wall, no dish in a cupboard, yet burst the atoms of the silent air apart. Shalimar looked at the two men incredulously. An impossible, forbidden, unseen universe was rocking the known, habitable world. Her senses screamed this knowledge; the men made no sign.

Outside a bird called, and another bird answered. And did she remember from conscious knowledge of Thuggee—or did she know because she was possessed, she in her turn!—that this bird cry and answer were Kali's sign and token?

"With Denny knocked out, I'm through with all this." Tony muttered unhappily. "You, Carl?"

"Me, too!" The voice had a twang, a slight gutteralness that might be mid-European, now. "Me, too! But we can't let her go. No place on earth would be safe for us."

"If there were any way of trusting her—" Tony began. "Especially as—Don't you see? You shouldn't have knocked Denny out. He *was* a focal point! Without Kanoor, I guess that crazy boy was our leader after all. And the worst of it is—I'm afraid to let her go; and half afraid to touch her. This—goddess! If she has been here with us—working through Denny—Well, don't you see? Kali hasn't gone away from here. She's—got something to do with—Shalimar. I'm afraid—whatever we do, will be only as she permits!"

The impossible happened then. Footsteps rang on the porch, and Merlin's voice called Shalimar's name.

Tony Rigotta threw the hearthrug over Pyar's body and slipped swiftly after Carl, who carried Denny into the kitchen.

Shalimar walked to the door. But it was not Shalimar who opened it; something strange and alien was using her body. She knew, and did not care.

On the porch were Merlin and Byron, Hiram and three other men.

"Hiram wired," Merlin said. "We have a car. We've come to take you home."

Then Byron said, "You look like a sleepwalker, my little girl. Hiram said there'd been a gang terrorizing the town. You and Pyar will come home with us?"

The stranger in Shalimar spoke carefully.

"Don't you think you should have telephoned? My husband is asleep. You know, he'd be bound to resent this—"

Merlin looked at her closely. It was a face she could have loved dearly, dearly—as dearly as that other dark, beautiful face. She felt tears behind the lids of her eyes and blinked them fiercely back.

"I thought I heard you, before we reached the house!" Merlin insisted. "I heard a woman scream. I thought it was your voice. And this is the only house—"

She was cold and hard, and she got rid of them. She stood in the open door and watched them drive away. Then she closed the door.

The two gangsters came back into the room, and they had drawn together in the imminent danger of the intruders.

Carl was holding the dark travelling cape with the hood, the one Shalimar had left hanging in the closet when she went out in her thin, light dress. It seemed a long time ago.

Tony spoke, his eyes averted.

"Too much talk it's been, all along. We've got to get rid of you, Miss, although I'd rather not. And since we built a pyre of logs up the arroyo, I think that's the answer. We'll wrap you—so—"

Carl threw the heavy wrap around her.

"Carry you so. No one would see, and if they did—a bundle—"

The hood went over her head, drew down over her face.

And still she did not care. She had been claimed by the dark goddess. She had belonged to her from the beginning. When she refused suttee, centuries ago, she had angered the goddess of death, and she had incurred a debt, and it was time to pay.

She felt herself lifted and car-

ried, as though her body were already dead. And she did not know if the rough uneven way was long or short.

When they had reached the place they loosed the hood, and she could see the desolate escarpement, and the piled wood. The men half poured, half scooped out butter from a gasoline can, throwing it upon the logs.

"The butter is all in lumps and splashes—it won't burn right. But it will light the wood."

"There ought to be more. And it wouldn't be so hard to handle in India," Carl grumbled; and Tony told him to shut up.

"Pyar should be here with her," he said then. And Carl said there was no time for any more play or games. Let them find Pyar, with all the other dead, the ones they had called *beetoos*.

"But most of the butter landed on the far side. There's a steep take-off over there—we'll have to lay the girl on the near side. She'll die slow!" Tony said shakily.

Carl answered slowly, his tongue seeming to savor the words: "Hell! I'll bet plenty Hindu wives died slow. Rich, high caste families like the Kanoors had all the *ghi* they needed to go up in smoke like fireworks. Poor devils' wives were dumped afterward into the Ganges half charred, with their husbands' bodies the same. What do we care?"

None of it mattered to Shalimar. Her thinking was detached. What was it the followers of Kali—and indeed all Hindus—believed about murder?

"No man dieth but by the will of God!"

Well, that was true. And when Kali entered into you to possess your thoughts and reconcile you to your own payment of a debt to death, you could know no enmity against her instruments. Her mind had closed against the awfulness behind the barn. You could think of only so much at a time, and there was no time left, and she thought only, now, of death.

Matches struck and went out, and each match lit the wild loneliness of the rocky gorge. A waning moon threw ghost shadows. The stars were bright and big, but very far. Didn't a widow dying in the flames go to a place in the sun beside her husband? But every star was a sun; would you find your own? And there were clouds.

BODILY sense and feeling passed away. The other senses sharpened incredibly. Shalimar did not feel the hands that lifted and bore her and laid her on the rough logs. But her ears caught the crackle of the logs as they caught fire; her

nostrils drank in the pungency of the oily smoke without offense. The hidden, frozen secret part of Shalimar surged upward in pre-ordained fulfillment. The iceberg knew its season of thawing, sundered and released its buried segments. Always this hour had swung toward her through Time and Space, as the great clock of the universe marked its slow time.

The flames curled up slowly, and the blue-black heavy smoke streaked upward like torn banners. They blotted out the stars, sweeping skyward, sagging downward like a canopy. The heat grew, but it did not concern Shalimar. She lived and the flames had not found her; but her life had passed into her eyes and ears and thoughts that were not thinking but a subliminal deep stream of consciousness.

This short eternal moment was life and death, escape from broken dreams, a greater thing than ugliness and killing, terror and heartbreak. It was fate, and its acceptance. There would not again be two Shalimars struggling against each other. Fire cleansed and welded; fire fused the soul into its true essence.

A log broke and part of the pile became a flaming hell, and it did not matter, because now everything was gone and forgotten.

She thought it a death-fantasy when she heard her name called by Merlin's voice:

"Shalimar! My weight will topple those logs into the fire. This way, toward my voice!"

Her body came to life, straining upward—with a curious, knowledge of its own of how to balance, to slip sidewise, not to disturb the logs which were giving toward the blazing heart of the fire.

She forced herself back to inertness. She had given herself to death and to Kali. She could not go back; and she crouched silent behind the wall of smoke, trying to win back the insensibility, shrinking now from the fury of heat, but shrinking more from a terror that he might try to take her by force.

And the double terror climaxed the life-long dualism that had tortured her, and she knew that she was quite mad, and did not care. Madness as well as death belonged to Kali the destroyer, and she was Kali's creature and sacrifice and adorer.

Merlin was right. His added weight, or any violent movement, would topple the pile. The instant the logs fell, she would be a flaming torch. If he could reach her then and drag her clear, and if she lived, she would be hideous, disfigured. If he forced her back from the death she had embraced, it would be into an awful travesty of life.

She had a swift, bright, awful vision of a woman who once had been a girl called Shalimar. The woman's face was veiled; behind the veil seared flesh cringed, mad eyes glared hate, and a twisted mouth gibbered endlessly.

For this place and hour and she herself belonged to Kali, and no man's hand could wrest her free.

But his voice called her again, saying words she would never have thought of his saying. Now, as the flames roared a new, high song and the black smoke eddied, choking her, Merlin cried:

"Shalimar! Quick, in God's name! Shalimar—*in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost!*"

The flames shot up in wilder fury, a near log burst and split, a burning spark struck her forehead. Shalimar crawled toward the voice. Her ears were ringing, they were filled with a sound of bells. Bells had rung so on her confirmation Sunday. She slipped from the smoking barrier of logs that fell in behind her, and they rang louder still. A spout of fire shot skyward, knives of hot pain stabbed her as her smouldering clothes ignited. Merlin tore off the cloak and then her flaming clothing and threw his coat around her. And from the heavens a sudden torrent of rain poured down, as though God had sent a baptismal cloudburst to put out a fire of hell.

Tears poured from Shalimar's eyes, washing dark images from her sight and soul.

MERLIN would not have waiting or delay, and they were married quietly and at once.

"It was a catharsis," he told her when they were driving East together. "You worked it out of your system by acting out the thing that always haunted you. You've a red scar between your brows that looks like a Hindu caste mark—but you've come home to your own time and race and faith.

"Tony and Carl Walker stole a plane in Durango and crashed it. Denny will face the courts. He will be given psychiatric treatment, perhaps. He seems to have been exactly what Byron said he was—a natural gateway for vicious influences.

"Knowing Pyar's belief—about his earlier incarnation and yours; you must remember that an Englishman saved you then. I'm English by descent; I love you now; maybe I loved you then. Maybe you would have loved me, too—but the old gods held you.

"It was not right that you should turn back to the old things. And after you saw—

what I'm sorry you had to see—"

He drove silently for a while, his face stern and drawn.

"It shocked you into feeling a *need* to die. I can understand that, too. Built on the old dream, on your love for Pyar; then, a need for expiation—for him, as well as for you. Then the dreadful Being so many of us had seen entered into you. I couldn't have won against *that;* no defiance of my own would have mattered then. Only an exorcism —only the Greatest Name—"

Since the night of horror, Shalimar had found it difficult to talk. Now she found words.

"Thank you for knowing. And —I won't forget. Not again, Merlin. That I'm supposed to be a child of light!"

Light was around them as they drove. The long road turned to sunset gold, and the mountains rose like silent, watchful guardians, snow patched and pastel tinted.

"You haven't told me how you drove Tony and Carl away. You followed us through the arroyo alone. You risked your life for me, Merlin."

"Even Byron believed you resented our coming because you were so happy with Pyar," Merlin said simply. "Only I—somehow knew. I made them let me out, and I watched and followed. I was delayed, then, by Denny. He ran after me, and I had to knock him down, finally, and left him lying—as you told me Walker had done once before that evening. When I reached the—the place—

"Those two were standing, watching the fire. They looked like two whipped dogs, or cornered rats, even before they knew that I was there. I had a revolver and I fired one shot. Then they ran. Only you mattered. The rest, you know."

The rest she knew. Someone had died, after all, in the flames that night. Someone had left her free, at last—waking and sleeping. The revenant who had owned the sovereignty of Kali was gone forever. Real and terrible was the ancient goddess of death; but for Shalimar the spell was broken, the power gone.

"My arm is determined to kill me."

FROM the beginning I should have stopped his obsession to make his left arm the strongest arm in the world. At first I thought it would help him to take an interest in something again, after the months he had spent in gloom and misery, unable to accept the loss of his right arm. I even helped him buy the barbell and weights and a pair of gloves so that he would not blister his hand. I remember now, how touchy he was about the gloves and had flung them across the room while I was copying out a set of exercises for him.

"What good is a right hand glove to me?" he demanded.

"Be sensible, Frank," I answered, "you can't buy one left hand glove."

"I don't care," he shouted. "You bought them to mock me with their ten fingers. I won't

**Heading by Joseph Eberle**

have them. I won't have them." He crossed to the bathroom and banged the door after him.

These angry outbursts of his, unpredictable, sudden, should have warned me; but my desire to help him clouded my judgment. My idea was to get him interested in something; anything. Until he realized he was not a cripple.

I misjudged the mind that once commanded his hands to do delicate wood carving.

His work had been remarkable but with the loss of his arm had come loss of interest in life, death of his soul. I had hoped to resurrect that life; to show him that his brain was the same creative brain he had before the accident.

HE BEGAN to work at the exercises with an energy that astonished me, day after day, night after night, hoisting up his barbell so many times I thought he would strain his heart. I warned him not to overdo it but he would not listen.

"I will make it the strongest arm in the world," he said to me one night, sweat dripping off his thin body, his black, curly hair soaked as if he had just stepped from a shower.

I stared anxiously at his face, ridiculously thin, the high cheek bones prodding through the tight, dark skin. His eyes were bloodshot, and the bags under them puffy and black.

"You must exercise the other parts of your body as well," I pointed out, "otherwise your arm will grow out of proportion to the rest of you. You were never a big man, Frank."

"I am not interested in the rest of my body," he snapped. "And if you leave me I can get on with my exercises."

A business trip took me away from London for nine months. I wish I had never gone. I realize now that by neglecting him for so long I was directly responsible for the night of terror which followed so swiftly.

In my absence he had doubled the size of his arm. I saw no beauty in the muscles that knotted themselves into great ugly lumps at his command. I could not share his excitement when he snapped a nail between his fingers and bent an iron bar held in a vise. To me this show of strength, amazing as it was, was childish, and I told him so.

He refused to listen to me and continued another two months, picking up heavier and heavier weights, so heavy that with my two arms I could not lift them as high as my knees.

THEN one night I called on him unexpectedly, after I had been to a theatre. His door was unlocked, and when he did

not answer my knock I went in.

He lay, naked to the waist, on his bed, his huge arm arcoss his chest. His eyes were shut but his lips moved. He was talking in his sleep. When he did not wake up after I had coughed and thumped my stick on the floor I listened to what he was saying. What I heard startled me.

"Pain . . How long must I roll and twist in agony? What are these vague shadows about me? Who is that man on the rack? God—it—is—it is—me. I am on the rack. The Inquisition has sentenced me to be tortured. What is that fiendish thing standing at the rack wheel? It is long and bloody. It—is—my God—it is—MY ARM! There is the finger I broke; there is the scar at my wrist. My arm resurrected to torture me. My arm slowly turning the wheel, stretching me out. Increasing the pain. Oh—the pain. The pain. The pain . . ."

The rest of it was choked by his groans. I crossed quickly to him and shook him roughly. He sat up, his eyes now open and frightened.

"Did you hear?" he whispered. "Was I talking?"

"Yes," I answered abruptly, "and what is it all about?"

"They come every day now. Every day. I cannot ward them off any more."

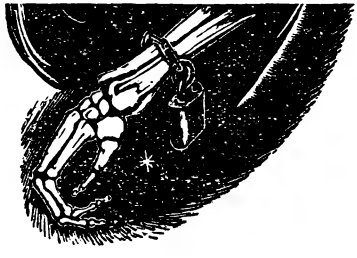
"What come every day?" I snapped petulantly. "For God's sake pull yourself together."

"The Moods. They come when I least expect them. And when they come I feel a rushing in my ears, my head swims and I cannot see. And I am back again reliving those awful moments after the accident. I see again my arm lying battered and useless, the fingers curled and motionless. I see again . . ."

"Stop it," I cried. "Stop it at once. You have been overdoing it with that barbell. Making your arm into a monster has become an obsession with you. Now you have made it so abnormally strong what are you going to do with it? Let it dominate you?"

HE GAVE a weird cry and scrambled off his bed.

"How did you know?" he cried excitedly. "How did you know?"



"Know what?" I asked, unable to keep the exasperation out of my voice.

"How did you know it dominates me?" he whispered.

I hate theatrics and was about to tell him so when he crossed over to me and caught me in a fierce grip, his fingers biting into my arm.

"Will you come and stay with me?" he pleaded. *"My arm is determined to kill me.* It wants to strangle me."

"Don't talk nonsense," I said severely. "That would be physically impossible. Your fingers would lose their grip as soon as you blacked out."

"That is where you are wrong," he answered stubbornly. "The fingers would go on squeezing and squeezing."

It was then I should have called in the doctor. Instead I moved in to share his room, sleeping on a camp bed I brought with me.

On the first night he had one of his nightmares, waking me up with a yell. He was talking in his sleep again.

"Look out," he shouted, "we are skidding. Too late. The car has hit the curb and we are rolling over. We are upside down in the back. The black-haired girl is lying across my stomach. Her back is to me and her dress has fallen to her waist. There is glass and blood. Everything is in a muddle. Everything is twisted, out of shape. Except the seams on her stockings. They are straight. I can't move my right arm. It is battered and useless. But I can move my left arm. Mind if I run my fingers up your seams, Cynthia? From now on I will only be able to feel left leg seams. Do you hear that nurse? Cynthia did not mind because she was dead. Do you mind, nurse? Have you met my ghost? If only he were not such a painful ghost. He has ghostly fingers and he plays ghostly tunes in my arm that is not here. Can you understand that, nurse? I have an arm you cannot see. I have fingers that dance and dance. Ghostly fingers in a dance of death . . ."

I SWITCHED on the light.

He was silent for a moment; then he started talking again, knotting the muscles on his arm as he clenched his fist.

"I can't kill myself. Put my fingers round my throat you say? Squeeze. Squeeze. My own fingers round my own throat? My own fingers to choke me . . . to choke me until I am suffocated? Dead? Squeeze, you say, squeeze . . ."

I crossed quickly to him and shook him awake.

"Frank," I cried. "Frank. It is all right. I am here." He stared at me sullenly for a moment.

"He will kill me one night, I cannot resist him much longer. I will have to obey him soon."

"Now look here, Frank," I said severely. "We are grown men. Such things are impossible

and you know it. I am not a psychiatrist so I do not know what is giving you these dreams and hallucinations."

"They are not hallucinations," he answered stubbornly.

I refused to argue with him and said, angrily, "Tomorrow I'm bringing Dr. Phillips to see you. He is a psychiatrist and a friend of mine."

"It won't help," he said gloomily.

"I'm going back to bed and to sleep," I said, determined not to give him any sympathy. However, I waited until I heard him snoring before I dropped off to sleep.

THE next day I phoned Phillips but he was out of town. I got him on the long distance and told him briefly about Frank. He said he could not be back until the next morning; but he would contact me as soon as he arrived.

Frank was surly all that day. I talked of the days we were in the army together to try to get his mind off it. But he was uninterested.

"Why didn't he come today?" he asked me repeatedly.

"I've already explained, Frank," I said patiently. "He is a busy man. I am taking you out to dinner; you hardly ate anything yesterday."

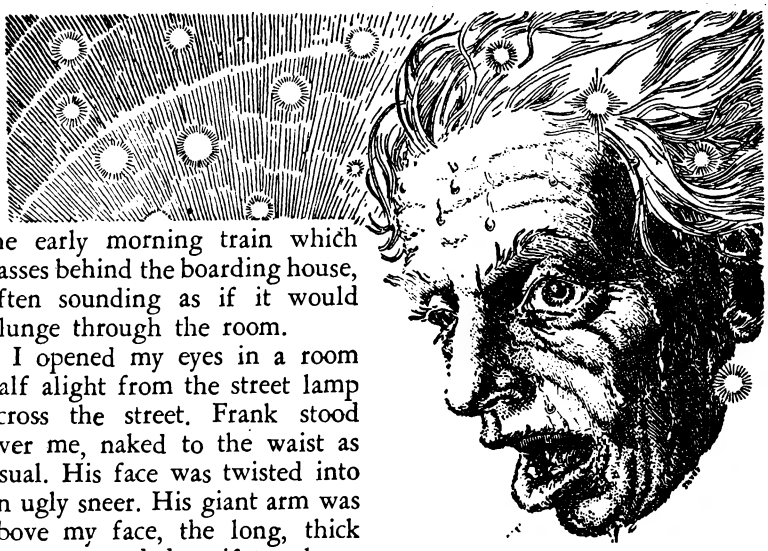
The meal was a bigger success than I expected and by the time we returned to his room he was cheerful. We stayed up until eleven. He told me about his trip to Kenya in 1950 and the lion he shot near Kilimanjaro. I felt that on this night we were both going to get a good sleep.

HE SAID he was tired and went to bed. I read for half an hour before putting out my bedside lamp. I was just settling down when I heard his mumbling. I sat up to listen.

"Right arm. What are you now? A stump or a dwarf? You are ugly. Red, like uncooked meat. And your head ends in an absurd point, like the tip of a gnome's hat. I am glad they are going to dress you up and hide your ugly face and the lines down your ugly sides. And why do you drip? Drooling at your mouth like a baby. They will hate you as they hate me. They will not look at you. They will laugh at you as they laugh at me. They will scorn you. You are ugly, frightfully ugly, they will say. So frightfully ugly . . ."

I waited but there was no more. Ten minutes passed and he was still silent. I decided he was all right.

I do not know what woke me. Whether it was the sound of some drunks laughing outside the window, merrily singing as they went home, or the crash of



the early morning train which passes behind the boarding house, often sounding as if it would plunge through the room.

I opened my eyes in a room half alight from the street lamp across the street. Frank stood over me, naked to the waist as usual. His face was twisted into an ugly sneer. His giant arm was above my face, the long, thick fingers extended as if to play a chord on the piano.

"Frank," I shouted, "wake up."

He had me by the throat before I could struggle up from the bed, my feet trapped in the bedding. At first he only gripped me lightly, but such was his power that I was held firmly as if tied by rope.

He forced me up until I was sitting and then pushed his sweating face close to mine.

"You did not believe me," he snarled. "You did not believe me. Now I must kill you. *He* says so. I must kill you and then kill myself."

He shook me gently from side to side increasing his pressure ever so slightly. Automatically my hands came up to try to break his grip. I might as well have tried to tear open a pair of locked handcuffs. I realized that as soon as he squeezed it would be over quickly. He would snap my neck.

I KNEW it was useless to try to reason with him. Something had clicked in his brain and he was going to kill me. They would find me with my neck broken, my tongue sticking out, my eyes bulging. And he would be locked up for life in an asylum, mumbling until he died that he had to obey his arm. He would tell the doctors that after he had made his arm the strongest arm in the world it

began to dominate him. That it had a will of its own. And they would laugh at him and say that only novelists thought up such ideas.

These ludicrous thoughts flashed through my mind. It was only when he began to squeeze that the terror of dying shocked me into action. I tried to burst my neck from his grip. My lungs sucked in air and his fingers choked it off as it came rushing out. A pain shot through my chest. I kicked at his shins and clawed the back of his hands with my nails, until I felt the blood running through my fingers. Blood thumped into my temples. The room spun round like a burnt out catherine-wheel. For a second his grip slackened. I screamed. The fingers tightened and a black blind curtained off my mind.

I was on one knee gasping for breath when the door burst open and someone entered. I struggled up and rushed for the door.

"No you don't," someone yelled. Something hit me behind the head and I fell to the floor.

WHEN I opened my eyes it was daylight and the room was filled with tramping men. Pain throbbed behind my eyes. Someone pulled me roughly to my feet and shoved me onto the bed.

A big man with a bloated face and a sad smile came over to me.

"Well, tell us about it," he said.

"About what?" I asked, feeling my throat.

"About last night."

"Where is Flanagan?" I asked, startled.

"You should know," he answered, "you killed him."

"And then choked myself I suppose," I snapped.

"A man from next door heard a scream. He thought he was dreaming. Then he heard scuffling and something thump to the floor. When he opened the door you tried to rush him. He hit you with a baseball bat."

"What nonsense," I cried. "Flanagan tried to kill me. He was mad."

The big man grinned. He took a pair of handcuffs from his pocket and stared idly at them.

"Where is he?" I shouted, alarmed.

"Over there," he answered.

He was ugly, dead. His face was swollen and blue and his tongue stuck out in a white foam of spittle. His eyes pressed out from their sockets in a wide, bloodshot stare.

*He had been strangled.*

"You know," said the big man sidling up to me, "it is impossible for a man to strangle himself."

. . . shadows that crept across the floor. . . .

# THE LILY MAID

## BY DOROTHEA GIBBONS

I WISH they would leave me alone. All I want is to be still and to be able to watch the doors, the folding doors which are dark and always in the shade.

Why should I have to turn my chair towards the window and the sun, and the slanting shadows on the grass? The wind makes a whispering noise in the leaves outside, and the little

Heading by Virgil Finlay

wrought iron gate throws crooked shapes on to the lawn. But I don't like any of these things. I like the dark corners of the room, and the folding doors which lead to what used to be the library. No, that's not true. I don't *like* the dark shadows, heaven knows I don't, but I must look at them—I must. Oh, what strange fate has brought me again to Astolat, the house I knew so well those years ago?

The Sprys have sold it, and it has been turned into a hospital for people who are suffering from things wrong with their nerves. I didn't ask to come here, and of course I didn't know I was to be sent to Astolat. But I suppose the way I looked and behaved must have worried Aunt Ellen. It's no good, anyway, being here, and I can't tell these people anything, because I'm at Astolat, of all places, and no one must know I've known it before.

And to be in this room, with the folding doors in front of me all the time. If they knew about everything, they would never let me stay in the Magnolia Room, as it used to be called, but I can't *not* be here, even though I hate it. I might find out, you see—

A knock at the door, and I called out impatiently, "Come in." It was a nurse with my tea.

"Hullo," I said.

"Hullo, dear," she answered, in a sort of cream and roses voice. "I'm going to look after you." She beamed at me with an attractive smile which for a fleeting moment made me feel comfortable inside. I heard her speaking again, but I had lost interest as I always did.

"Dian's your name, isn't it? I hope I may call you that, and now please eat your tea, I do so want you to."

Vaguely I noticed the teacup with the roses on it, and the bread and butter cut as fine as could be. Done to attract the sick mind, of course, but I was wearied now with the nurse's chatter. She said her name was Phoebe. But I turned my eyes towards the folding doors and kept on thinking of the far off days when Jennefer Spry and I were friends.

I GOT through tea somehow. It was less trouble to eat it than to argue with Phoebe. I discovered you couldn't annoy her and make her lose patience, so it was no wonder she had been picked to look after a wreck like me.

Then "—the doctors say you won't talk about yourself, won't help them to help you." Phoebe's voice went on tinkling through my head.

I said to her, "If you all think I'm mad it's better I should know it."

"You're *not* mad. You wouldn't be here if you were. You must have had some shock, something that's preying on your mind—"

I laughed. I didn't know I could, but it can't have been a pleasant sound, because I saw Phoebe wince.

I wouldn't talk any more, my head ached and I had started to think about the night which I dreaded, and the drugs I had to have before I could sleep. And here I am, in this room and brought back to Astolat. Now I may have a chance to find out what has haunted me all these years. But how can I, just from a room and folding doors kept locked? They are locked, because I've tried them.

But now I was not to be left alone, it seemed. I suppose they were afraid I should run out of the long windows into the garden and drown myself in the lily pond. That I didn't want to live was true enough, but it was far too much trouble to try to die.

After a few days Phoebe went on night duty with me. I dreaded the nights so much and I asked if I could have her.

One night when the moon was full, I lay watching the lawn and the trees which were somehow like people, quite different from how they look by day. It was about three in the morning and I always woke then. Phoebe was knitting by the light of a shaded lamp. I didn't speak to her, but watched the moonlight, and gradually it started to make a track across the floor towards the far corner, now darkly in shadow. I lay very still and watched. The moonlight crept further into the room, and then the light flickered at the bottom of the folding doors.

It will be said that a woman in my state, filled with sleeping stuff, will imagine anything. Moonlight may appear to be a shining ship or a fairy's palace, or a creature born of wind and water, but what I saw crouching there where the moonlight lay was none of these things.

I screamed. Then Phoebe was beside me her strong arms round me, reassuring me. I couldn't tell her what I had seen. I couldn't tell anyone, and the fear of what it might have been was almost more than I could bear.

A FEW days later I was told that a visitor had arrived to see me, and when the door opened, in came Simon Drew—a link with the past indeed. He had been a great deal at Astolat in the far off days, and he was one of those little middle aged bachelors who never get any older. He lived in the village and was possessed of considerable private means. He had always been charming to ladies, as he

called Lucinda and me, neither of us much over eighteen then, both of us spoilt and in all truth good looking. Lucinda definitely was—but I don't want to talk about Lucinda now.

Simon hopped across the room with his well remembered jerky walk. I felt perfectly frightful because he reminded me of all the things I feared and hated.

He said, "My dear child! To think we should meet again after all these years, and to find my little friend at Astolat of all places! And I only knew you were here because your aunt wrote and told me. They tell me here that you have never said you used to know Astolat so well, but I can understand it when the nerves are all upset. Now, I've not come to tire you, but to cheer you up. You've a grand view from this room, I've always loved it."

He hopped and bustled about the room, chattering like a bird, and except that his bushy eyebrows were whiter now, he was very much the same little man who used to flatter us, especially Lucinda. He avoided my eyes as if he didn't want to look at me much. I knew only too well what I was like. I had a mirror in my bag which no one had found. You're never allowed mirrors. You might try to cut your throat.

I felt like screaming, and Simon went on and on.

"Lovely Dian," he ran on in the silly way he had, "the same ash blond hair and the wide gray eyes—the Lily Maid indeed—" The same ridiculous name he had for me too.

"Shut up, Simon, there's a dear," I said wearily. "You needn't act, I know what I look like, and if I do look anything like the Lily Maid, it must have been when she was dead and floating down the river in the barge to Astolat."

I laughed and Simon didn't seem to like the sound any better than Phoebe had done.

The visitation was got through somehow, and Simon jerked his way to the door, where he stood for a moment with his head on one side, his twinkling eyes as bright as a robin's.

"Goodbye, Simon, goodbye," I said, trying to get rid of him. "Yes, I'll try to get better soon; yes, of course, you must come again."

Now Simon, in spite of his easy manners, had always had one great failing and it was strange I should hear it now. It was his habit of whispering. I suppose he thought he was just speaking softly, but he never was. He whispered, and the hissing sound of it carried far more than an ordinary speaking voice. I could hear him now when he was outside the door.

"That poor child! I couldn't

have believed she could have changed so much. Will she ever—?"

He was apparently discreetly removed.

THE next day the weather broke and a gale tore the young leaves from the trees and scattered them on the lawn. Many of the tulips were broken, their heads lying in the mud and they brought me some, with the usual silly chatter about what a shame it was that the bright colors were dimmed by dirt, battered and spoilt.

"But they'll revive in water," one of the nurses said brightly. "Look, I'll put them where you can see them."

I didn't want to see them and turned my eyes away, and in the dimness of the overcast day I sat and looked at the folding doors.

That night the moon came out, struggling through the clouds, and dim and frail, the light fell across the floor as I had seen it before. It was so nebulous that it was in a sense nothing, the thing that I knew I was seeing for the second time. It was faint and shifting, it had no real light, no color. The faintness shivered towards the folding doors, and this time I could see it had a face, undulating, moving, never still.

But it was a face.

I cried out in horror, I shrieked as I had done before, and Phoebe was beside me.

"The doors!" I gasped. "You saw?"

"Moonlight, dear," she said stoutly.

"No!" and I shuddered, icy cold. "Not moonlight. Lucinda."

For you see, Lucinda was dead.

AND now I shall have to speak of Lucinda. I shall tell it as quickly as I can, because I hate doing it. At the beginning of the war, the Sprys were living at Astolat, and Lucinda Spry worked on the home farm. I drove an ambulance for the A.R.P. and I lived in the village with Aunt Ellen. There was nothing much to do, no bombing then; we just had rather a good time. Naval Officers came from Keignmouth and we entertained them and among them was John Tregellick.

Lucinda was beautiful and gay and John fell for her, or so I thought, and I, unfortunately for me, fell in love with him. I can remember the happy days altering, and I grew madly jealous of Lucinda. There were four of us at Astolat many evenings of that late summer, Lucinda and I, and John and Simon, fussy little Simon Drew, making the fourth.

One evening I couldn't bear it any more and I ran across the lawn in the twilight, tears on my

face. I can hear John's voice now, calling to me.

"Dian! Dian!" But I ran all the faster, and tumbled into a rose bush where he caught me, lifting me out as if I was a child, and holding me close.

"It's you I want, little fool, it always has been. I don't like her, not like that, but she—" And then across the garden we heard her calling his name. She could never let him out of her sight, she was one of the possessive sort, and as John and I stood there together even after what he had told me, I knew I hated and feared her because of him. And that's what is so awful now.

It happened on the night of the first blitz we had. It was a bad one, and to us, who were as yet untried, it was ghastly. On the way back from Keignmouth when it was over, I stopped the ambulance in a lane near Astolat, and ran up across the field to see how they were. I found the front door unlocked and I went in, shining my torch. It was a very dark night and the blob of light wavered about like a will o' the wisp, over the walls, the stairway, the doors. Then I remembered that, of course, they must be in the shelter.

But then I thought of the library and when I went in I heard something moving . . . and then I saw. Against the window, open and unblacked, the garden door, something black was running, running through the long window, away across the lawn.

NOW comes the appalling part of it, and I must hurry on with the telling because I hate it so much. It was worse than the air raid, and the dead people, and the things that had been people, hidden away under sacks—

Because I can remember nothing at all after that, until I woke up next morning at the ambulance station. When I asked them what time I had got in, they said about four o'clock. I had apparently said I was late because I had had engine trouble. I had been in a queer collapsed state and they had put me to bed.

When I got home the following morning, the maid we had told me the news.

Lucinda Spry was dead. Found dead in the library at Astolat, lying near the folding doors, and she had been strangled with a little bit of fine cord.

And I had been at Astolat that night.

There was no one to talk to. Aunt Ellen, whom I lived with as I've said, was away. Anyway I couldn't have told anyone I had been to Astolat, and about the black running figure, and how I remembered nothing after see-

ing it until I woke up that morning.

You see, even if I'd been accused of Lucinda's death, I would have told, I would indeed, but I couldn't for a very good reason.

Because I *had* remembered something else after I'd seen the running figure.

I had seen in the beam of my torch a naval cap lying on the floor in the library, and John Tregellick was still in Keignmouth.

A verdict of murder by a person or persons unknown was brought in. There were very few witnesses forthcoming because poor Mrs. Spry was in the shelter all the time. There was no mention of the naval cap.

There was another awful thought in my mind as well, which lived in company with the other horror all those cruel years.

Had *I* killed Lucinda and couldn't remember?

I WENT to the north and drove an ambulance up there. I would have nothing to do with men, and when John wrote to me, which he did frequently, I never answered his letters and when he came on leave I managed to avoid him. That was my life for the rest of the war, and after I was released I seemed so peculiar that Aunt Ellen made me see a doctor. After that I was sent to Astolat, Astolat the nerve hospital now, that house of all others in the world.

And now it seems to add to my misery, I've seen Lucinda who is dead.

The days dragged on and I got no better. Then through the open windows of my room one evening I heard voices, and one was the hissing whisper of Simon Drew and it roused me as no ordinary voice would. I had been half asleep and it echoed in my mind like something half remembered, half forgotten. Someone answered him.

"Hush, Dr. Drew. She might hear you. No, she's no better. She won't speak of what's troubling her. Can *you* remember anything about her which—"

They moved away.

That night the awful things which troubled my mind were worse than ever. As the darkness came on, I felt as if a pendulum was swinging in my head, first on one side, then on the other, louder, louder, then softer and loud again. Was it John? Was it me? Did you kill her, John? Or did I? Which of us! Which of us? And the words beat inside my head like the long swinging pendulum of a monstrous clock, never ending, never ceasing, until I rushed down into the blessed unconsciousness the drug

brought me—black and warm and quiet and uncaring.

Simon came again next day and he hopped into my room in his usual bird-like fashion.

"You're not helping the doctors, I hear. Dian, my dear, this won't do. We're worried about you, you should get on faster, Dian," and he lowered his voice. Then, as I feared, the whispering started.

"Dian, what can you remember of that night when poor Lucinda died? I believe you *can* remember?" His soft hissing voice terrified me.

"I remember nothing," I told him. "Don't worry me, Simon!" I cried.

"But you do," he whispered, his face close to mine, his round eyes peering at me, "you do, and you won't tell. Say it to me, your old friend. Were *you* here, at Astolat, that night?"

Something seemed to snap inside my head.

"Yes!" I screamed back at him. "Yes, yes, I was here, and I saw someone running — no, that wasn't it. I expect *I* killed Lucinda. But I can't remember, I can't. But say I did it. It's probably true."

It had come out, part of it, after all these years. Ashamed and horrified I heard someone a long way off screaming and it must have been me. Then I was given something and I slept.

It was after that I saw the gargoyle. It wasn't one really, but when I woke in the gray summer's dawn before the color had come back to the garden, I saw something behind the little wrought iron gate on the lawn. Something which looked like a face was peering through, and the tracery of the iron work made a gargoyle of it; a grinning thing buttressed on a wall or a satyr leering by a pond. I was terrified and the thing tantalised my

memory. In some dim way I associated the face with something or somebody.

When I looked again, it had gone. The sun rose in soft pale majesty, and drew the dew off the grass like spangled cloak—I slept again, uneasily

THAT morning I saw a bit in the paper which at once thrilled and terrified me. Some naval officers had received decorations for conspicuous gallantry during the latter part of the war. There was a picture of some of them outside Buckingham Palace.

Among them was John Tregellick and he looked much older.

I was always listening at night, and it wasn't so much that I was afraid of seeing what I thought had been Lucinda, partly because the moon had gone now and the nights were very dark. But I had an uneasiness always with me about the garden outside. Once or twice I thought I heard something padding by on the grass. I asked that the long windows should be kept shut, until one night there was a storm brewing and they had to be open because of the heat. I was half dreaming of John Tregellick and poor Lucinda and Simon Drew—Simon Drew and John and Lucinda. They all muddled together in my mind until they became a solid block of horror and fear.

Ah God! Quite suddenly I was wide awake. There was a flash of lightning, a muffled rumble of thunder, but in that light I saw two figures, one behind the other, running towards the house. I screamed to Phoebe. There was another flash of lightning, the lamp in the room fused, but not before I had seen something coming in at the window. Then in the pitch darkness I felt hands clutching at my throat, and a man yelling and grappling at the thing which was attacking me; I heard Phoebe shrieking for help.

Then lights blazed out from torches, the night porter and night Sister came running, I saw Phoebe's white face, and something on the floor struggling in the grip of a tall man who had his back to my bed. There was a ghastly gobbling going on from the creature on the floor. The doctor and the night porter and the tall man dragged it out of the room.

But I had seen the faces of the two who had run in from the darkness, the tall man and the thing which gobbled.

One was John Tregellick, he was the tall man, and the other—the other who had attacked me was Simon Drew.

Then I knew that Simon's had been the face behind the iron

gate, the grinning gargoyle, the leering satyr. He had looked like that now, without the tracery of the wrought iron in front of him.

He must have been utterly mad. How could he kill me in a room where somebody sat with a light, and not be found out?

THEN John came back, and with him all the sane and happy things, and he held me so tight that I could hardly breathe. His hard cool face was against mine and everything went round like a rainbow joined together. I couldn't speak. I just shook and cried from thankfulness. From a long way off I heard Phoebe speaking.

"The doctor says you may stay for a little while," she said to John.

"So I didn't kill Lucinda," someone said in a thin high voice which I knew was mine, "and you didn't either. Of course it was Simon. There's been something puzzling me for a long time about him. I expect I saw him that awful night and have forgotten."

It was as if John's health and love was running into my weak body from the very touch of his hands, and what had died in me was coming to life again. The flame of his strength ran down into my veins like wine.

The tangled web was sorted out between us, how Simon now owned to killing Lucinda in his jealousy because she cared for John. He had tried to kill me tonight for fear I should remember seeing him at Astolat, which he believed I had. The cap was a yachting cap of Simon's, and he had returned to fetch it after I had gone. They seemed to think he was very unbalanced and would probably be sent to Broadmoor.

John had tracked me down to Astolat and arrived off a late train that night. He said something made him go there and he prowled round the gardens unseen by anybody. He had come across Simon Drew creeping into my room.

And poor pale shivering Lucinda? Was she a moon creature I had seen against the folding doors? Perhaps she had been the imaginings of an overwrought mind. I don't know. But what I saw was so very like her, even to the little pearl necklace she always wore.

Poor Lucinda.

I flitted silently across rivers whose names I had never heard.

# Morpho on the screen

**Arthur J. Burks**

A RECURRENT dream inspired me to visit the Amazon Valley, the jungles of Central Brazil. I don't just remember where the dream began, it came first so long ago. I was the hero of the dream. I was very small; so small that I rode, easily, surely, on the back of a butterfly. I was utterly free. I traversed jungles I had never yet seen. I flitted silently across rivers whose names I had never heard. When I was old enough to read I discovered the name of the largest one, and found it already an old friend: the Amazon.

Long before I found her picture in my schoolbooks, I rode Morpho through scenes of the most heartbreaking beauty. I had never heard of Her Ladyship Morpho, but she, too, was an old friend. Her wings held no dust. They were bright light blue, their sheen so aggressive it hurt the eyes.

Each night I made plans to

**Heading by W. H. Silvey**

mount Morpho. Each dream I learned some new exquisite thing. One night, for instance, we flew, in the rest of the world's silence, but amid soft music of our own, northward across the mouths of the Amazon from Belem, on the Bay of Guajara, to Macapa, the blazing town through whose heart the Equator passes. Lady Morpho never tired. As we approached each island she dropped down to just under the jungle crown. There, she put both of us in close communion with the trees, the lianas, the insects, the birds, animals, reptiles. Each living thing, I knew before ever I attended school, had a musical note of its own, like a singing heartbeat, by which "true-dreamers" could always recognize it. Lady Morpho introduced me to other Morphos, Lords and Ladies, and I made countless new friends thus, for each Morpho bore on his back, or her back, one of the Small Ones about whom the life of the world revolves. They were the musicians who played the music for the living, and I found that I was one of them. Each Small One was a kind of key. A different kind of Small One lived with a differently-keyed creature: simbiosis, such living is called.

Under the shadowed trees, sometimes in total darkness which kissed one with lips of soft velvet, sometimes flitting from shaft to shaft of exquisite moonlight, Lady Morpho and I learned the small jungle secrets. We learned how the tracua ant lived, high among epiphytes in the tallest of trees, how the tracua ascended and descended on rubbery lianas, from ground to wild pineapple nest; how the music of the tracua varied with his distance from the black floor of the jungles. We learned how the tree boas sang among themselves, but did not hear their own singing, because it was music that moonlight, or sunlight, or total darkness, made when it touched their varicolors.

I learned, little by little, to know the whispers of leaves, of nuts, fruits, flowers, to realize that every living thing had a way of speaking, and that in these matters the Small Ones were master linguists.

Lady Morpho and I never descended more than a few feet below the jungle crown. I think she was born knowing that it wasn't safe. She was a precious lepidoptera, and men and women sought her often and everywhere, with long-handled nets.

WHEN we flew to the ends of islands, and were over the brown waters, Lady Morpho, half the size of my palm when I was "I," decreased altitude slightly, so that I could hear the voices of the rivers, like the

Jacare, the Jabiru, the Taujuri, the Straits of Breves and the mighty main stream of which all the others were parts: the Amazonas herself. Down low against the water I could see the fish below the surface, the acara, acari, the surubim, the *piranha.* Authorities insist that there are no *piranha* on the Lower Amazon, but long before I ever saw the name in any book, I had seen three varieties of the *piranha,* in the "mouths" of the Amazon.

I remembered every detail of each dream, and when I was old enough to write, I set them down in great detail. I called my record a "journal" instead of a "diary," because adventurers wrote journals, stay-at-homes wrote diaries.

Lady Morpho, sometimes the same Lady for several dreams, when she would vanish and some other Lady would take her place in my dream—I knew even when very small that vanished Ladies had been taken to some everlasting place by Small Ones who didn't have to waken and grow big, as I must—always taught me something.

She taught me to hear and feel. Every human being hears the whisper of light winds in the leaves. But where is the human being who, hearing such whispers, can say that the leaves belong to the jutahi, the molongo, the hevea, the apricot, the urucu, the apple, the plum, the massaranduba, without actually seeing the leaves of the tree? These things I learned to know; they were my introduction to exquisite music. I was never in fact a musician, but I knew master music, *world* music, for always I heard it when I slept.

Then, though I slept at night, and dreamed at night, sometimes I would find myself atop Lady Morpho in broad daylight; but always somewhere in the jungles, where the whole world was warm, almost hot, sometimes even *blazing.* I knew, before I knew Morpho, that the Lady was a hothouse Pegasus; only the tropics knew her, and that fairly close to the equator.

Sometimes we flew close above the heads of Indians, making music with their primitive flutes. Whence did the Indians have their music? I learned that, too, for though the Indians did not see them, they were surrounded by the creatures of the wilderness, each creature closely allied with a Small One, each Small One an impatient perfectionist who screamed—though no Indian could hear, with his *ears,* that is—at the flutists until they produced something at least akin to Music. And because it was the best they could do at the time, the Indian music was world music, too.

During the days when Lady Morpho bore me across river,

lakes, creeks, below the crowns of the mighty *castanhas,* the lordly *piquia,* every brilliant junglescape was shot through and through with sunshine. Dazzled, almost blinded, I rode from shaft to shaft aboard Lady Morpho, to make each time more glorious discoveries: each shade, each tint, each primary color—I never saw *exactly* a primary color—had, like other living things (for who could say that color was not a living thing?) its note of divine music. Blue, violet, orange, but not *exactly* blue, violet, or orange; no, the shades and tints between and through, spoke each for itself, and Lady Morpho showed me how to hear them as *she* heard them. She did it so easily. She simply flew me into the shaft of light. Its beauty bathed me, and so my spirit heard its music—and never forgot so much as the infinitesimal fraction of a note.

I began to tell people little "Amazon" stories when I was very young. I knew better than to tell them whence the stories came. Friends listened to them, spellbound, and asked how they might remember them, so that I set them down on paper. When I was old enough to go to school, indeed when I had been in school three or four years, I discovered that I had a rather good voice. I didn't have perfect pitch, not quite, but it served. I began to hum, or sing without words, the music I heard in my dreams; the music of moonbeams, of sunlight, of rainbows, of leaves, of ants, and butterflies; I hummed and sang mostly the songs of the *silent* things, rather, the tiny creatures which, to all humanity, *seem* to be silent. I knew better than to tell anyone whence the music came.

VARIOUS people transcribed the music I hummed or sang, or tried to; but they could never quite capture it, nor could any musical instrument they produced quite reproduce the minor things out of my dreams. I knew then that man, as man, was not to have, to hear, or see, or feel, the little secret things I heard, saw, felt, while I slept, and some small, *very* small, part of me roamed the jungles, the rivers, sang with the moonbeams and the rainbows, with starlight over brown-black waters, and recorded every last experience, every slightest sound and feeling, in that small segment of the heart and spirit which, I was *sure,* had experienced it.

When I was twelve, older people came to see me, to question me. How did I know these stories I told? Whence came the music I hummed and sang, which nobody could ever quite accurately play, though even masters tried it? Authorities, they

told me, had been able to check on some of the jungle things, to find them miraculously accurate. How could this be, when I had never been a hundred miles from my own home, and had some of the experiences, knew some of the music, before I was able to read? Who had taught me, since my parents did not know, either?

"Lady Morpho," I said, and knew even then that I had said too much.

Lest, as father warned me, I become "queer" to people, I held my peace through my 'teens. But even more frequently thereafter, when I slept, that small strong part of me wakened at once, already aboard the blue metallic back of some Lady Morpho, who carried me away to teach me new knowledge of the secret places of the world.

Naturally, when I became a man, and a scientist, a graduate *magna cum laude* from a great Eastern college, I told nobody of my boyhood dreams, certainly not that I still had them, more sharply detailed in all ways with each experience. No two experiences were ever the same, so perhaps I should not call them "recurrent" at all. But so would a scientist have called them.

I INHERITED money on graduation, so I went straight away to the Valley of the Amazon, to research all the dreams of my life. Now, however, I was not a Small One. I was a man grown, eager to know, as a man, the shadowed aisles of the Hylean Amazon, the criss-crossing game trails, the lianas, the reptiles whose bodies whispered through the leaves and mold, the plants, poison and medicinal, the cotton trees, the huge nut trees, the strange fragrant fruits without names, the animals and birds, the creeks, rivers, lakes and ponds, the giant saurians. I wished to hear the tongues of the creatures. I wished to see in fact the substance of my dreams.

In one way it was a vast disappointment. Afoot in the jungles, burning in the sun on river smallboats, parched with fever within a week, crawling with food pains in much less time, I knew that, as a man, the jungle was not for me. Walking among the giants of ancient rain forests was a grind I could scarcely endure. One never took a normal step, because of holes, windfalls, trees uprooted, protruding rocks, above-ground roots of great thickness. One stepped short, then long, long, then short; one jumped, slid, staggered. One was never in balance, always trying to balance, and it was Hades afoot. I perspired until there seemed to be no moisture left in me. My eyes blurred with the

steaming heat. I lost two pounds a day the first ten days.

But in another way, my dreams were brilliant as the wings of my own Morphos. When I slept in my hammock, my buttocks swinging but a few inches above moldy jungle floor where snakes, tarantulas and scorpions crawled, I wakened instantly aboard some Lady Morpho, and all the jungles which had refused me knowledge, now gave it me. Where I had stumbled and staggered, had fallen and risen—each time rising with more painracked difficulty—I now moved wholly harmonious and free, sometimes by dream-night, sometimes by dream-day, but always at the peak of perfect health, at my highest plane of perceptiveness, with mounting joy in me, joy so great that it was always a shock to waken again in my hammock to find myself aching in every ligament, bone, muscle, even my eyelids. The contrast between sleeping and waking—whichever was sleeping, which waking—was almost too great to be borne. As a man I dwelt in the descending depths; as a Small One I reached for the stars, and Pegasus Lady Morpho bore me.

On occasion, when the fever was on me by day, and I talked—so my associates said—deliriously beyond belief, even talking, with strange exaltation, as if I rode the occasional Morphos which appeared up under the jungle crown, where the shadows swung, I actually *did* ride Morphos, as I did when I slept and dreamed. For what dream is more intense, more factual, than the dreams of malaria, dengue, and jungle or yellow fever? If anything, my fever dreams were sharper, more ecstatic, than my hammock dreams. For during my fever dreams I walked the jungles, and so my man-living entered into my Small One—living, and the two were strangely fused.

I BEGAN inscribing in my journal, not the things I learned as a grown man, tramping the jungles, though I *included* those items, as minor contributions, but the things that came to me as a Small One, atop the ever-ready Morpho. And speaking of Morpho my Brazilian and Indian guides and hunters noted an odd fact when and while I deliriously pretended *to* be riding a Morpho: a Morpho, at such times, *always* flitted far above us, under the jungle crown! I could have told them. It was just as well none of them had the eyes of the Irish, to see the Small Ones. Then they would have known that while I moaned and babbled in delirium, I wasn't even in the staggering body that voiced its agony.

My doctor put down his foot after a few weeks of it, during

which I had amassed an amazing amount of information no man whose work I had ever read, and assembled on any Amazon Valley expedition. I spoke of sounds no one else had ever heard, suspected, or, of course, recorded. Given time, I could have recorded those sounds; I'd have had to construct special adaptations of recording devices then in general use, but I knew how to do it.

"Go out," the doctor told me, "and soon, or you'll die!"

I told him I didn't mind dying, and found my own statement, somewhat to my amazement, true. My Indians and Brazilians were aghast. I stayed on in the Amazon Valley for weeks beyond the day of safety. I was a sick man, but a joyous man, for while I had come home to my jungles a failure, I had lived in them, as I had lived in them in my dreams all my life, a success beyond all expectations.

I knew the jungles as only the Small Ones, who paint their leaves, who guide their creatures, who color their rainbows and starshine, who know their music and direct it with infinitesimal batons, could know them.

I went home, finally, perfectly at peace, to die. I myself knew I had stayed too long.

I settled down in Eastern Pennsylvania to wait. I did not know how the summons would come, but only that it would. I dreamed no more of Morpho riding. That was done, and I knew it. I slept dreamlessly. By day I wrote my books and stories. I tried to mimic the creatures whose voices no other man had ever heard, but it was no go. I couldn't record them. I consoled myself with this thought:

"This music is not yet for mankind."

I had two servants, a married pair. One morning Jennie came to me, all excited. I had already heard Taffy, my cocker spaniel, barking in the backyard until her voice was an endless ululation.

"Are you strong enough to come to the back screen?" asked Jennie.

I managed it, knowing there was something strange there, to startle Jennie. Louis, her husband was there, staring.

AGAINST the screen, outside, was an impossible something: a living Morpho, metallic light blue wings opening and closing. It was half the size of my palm. If my information were correct it could not live north of southern Mexico. Yet it lived here, and clearly had flown a long and weary way. Slowly, carefully, I opened the screen. The Morpho flew free, swung gracefully about the outer edge of the screen, and entered my home. For a moment it stood in the air in front of my face,

as if to identify me. Then it fluttered down to the floor, all strength spent, and expired in ghostly silence as, to other men, all Morphos moved.

"I never seen such a butterfly," said Jennie.

"I have, in the Brazilian jungles," I said, not realizing what it could mean to a pair of superstitious Plain People. "It is a Morpho. It can't live so far north."

"How did it *get* here, then?" asked Louis.

"Possibly I drew it hither!" I murmured.

I knew now, the manner of my departure. Only, I did not know exactly when. I lost much ground that week. I became weaker and weaker—and, surprising Jennie and Louis, happier.

In the second week Jennie came to me again.

A second Morpho peered in through my backdoor screen, but I could not go to see it. I told Jennie how to open the door so as not to frighten the glistening blue-backed butterfly from Brazil's jungle shadows. Then, I waited.

From the back screen to my bedroom, the way leads through a kitchen, a dining room, a sitting room, up two flights of steps, and a turn to the left, and there I lay, waiting. Morpho came in just ahead of Jennie and Louis, whose faces would never be paler in their coffins. Morpho alighted on the high foot of my bed, her face to the window. Then she turned, and looked majestically down upon me. She rested for a few minutes. Then she toppled onto the counterpane, and I knew that my time was not yet.

I lost more ground, *much* more ground.

Near the end of the third week, palefaced Jennie and Louis came to me together. There was a third Morpho on the screen of my back door. This one, they told me fearfully, showed not the slightest signs of fatigue. This one, they insisted, would live much longer! Then, I knew.

The third Morpho, as the second had done, preceded Jennie and Louis to my bedroom. It came to me, they whispered, as if it knew exactly where to find me. And why should it not find its way through my house, since it had found me across two great continents, I demanded weakly.

Lady Morpho stood on the foot of my bed, looking at me. Sunlight came through the high windows, and the blue of Her Ladyship's metallic back filled the room with faint azure light. And the azure light made music that only I could hear—and, possibly, Lady Morpho.

This Morpho showed not the slightest inclination to die. She

pranced back and forth on the bed-foot. She rose to the ceiling, examining the high corners. She returned to the bed-board, looked at me, as if impatient to be off. In every way available to her, she *told* me.

And when, near dusk that night, I knew beyond any possible mistake, I called Jennie and Louis to me.

"Tonight, sometime," I told them, "I shall leave you, on a long, long journey. People will say that I have died, but you will know that this is not so. Will you remember this, Jennie, Louis?"

They both nodded, even their lips white. Their eyes were wide as they glanced at the very much alive Morpho, striding back and forth on my bed-foot.

"And I charge you, as my principal heirs," I told Jennie and Louis, "to remember this as you wish your own salvation when *your* turn comes: when you know that I am gone, open the door and let Lady Morpho go."

They didn't understand, of course, how could they? But they nodded their promise, and I knew they would keep it. With Lady Morpho keeping me impatient company, I waited.

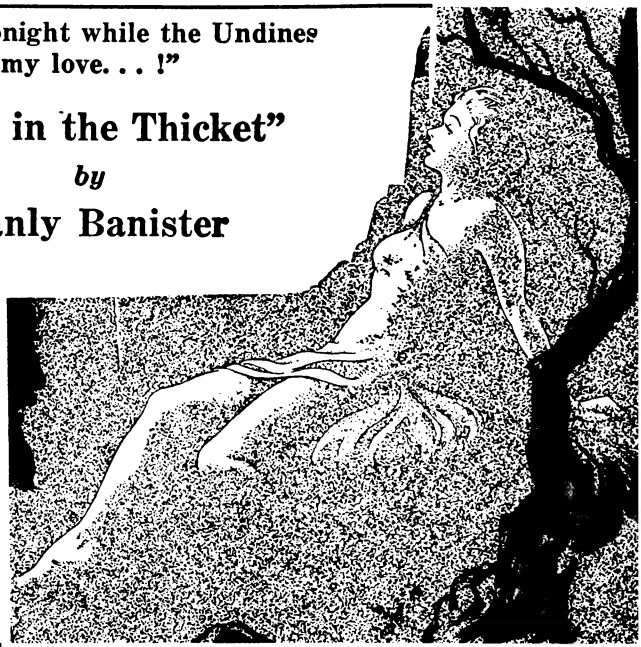
**". . . tonight while the Undines dance, my love. . . !"**

**"Song in the Thicket"**

***by***

**Manly Banister**

**in our next issue**



When one wanted something very much, could the very seas bring it to you?

# NEPTHÆ

*BY SUZANNE PICKETT*

THE salt spray spewed up from the rocks and the wind whipped his hair about his face as Brent Belgium strode along the rocky shore. Here at last was a sort of peace. Here he had found what he wished.

But even here he remembered Ingrid's face. Why not forget her? There was nothing about either of them to make it possible to live together. His temperament was as dark and restless as his eyes and hair: and hers as cold, yet as fierce as the icy wind that whipped across her homeland.

Well, they had tried it three years. Three years of happiness, anguish and despair. But finally it ended sordidly; in the divorce courts and blazing across the morning papers.

**Heading by W. H. Silvey**

Yes, he was to blame. He had taken the girl out on his yacht; but it was in anger against Ingrid. He had meant to come back before midnight; but unfortunately, the drinks were stronger than he had realized. They had both gone to sleep and their sleep and been as innocent as that of brother and sister.

But when he awoke next morning and ordered the boat to shore it hadn't looked that way. Ingrid met them with reporters and cameramen and—

Well, she was in Paris now running around with some Prince. And he lived here in this old house near San Francisco. Of one thing he was sure. He was cured of women. Never again could another stir him, not after he had known Ingrid. He didn't even want to see another woman.

It was just at this moment that he saw *her,* and his heart stopped a minute while fear raced across the rocky shore with him. How had she reached here? Had the tide washed her ashore, and from what place had she come?

She couldn't have been dead long, he thought as he bent over her. Her face was not swollen and distorted. He remembered with a shudder other bodies floating around him; pieces of a ship and himself clinging to a raft.

Well, that was over now, but here was new terror. For one minute he was afraid to touch her. With his reputation, suppose someone accused him—

He started to go away, but looked at her again, and drew in his breath. Nothing earthly had a right to be so beautiful. Even Ingrid would seem plain beside this girl. She might have been sleeping, and comfortable in her sleep.

Her hair was as silvery as the whitecaps in the moonlight. It even had blue-green shadows in its depths, like waves of white that showed the real color beneath. But her lashes and brows were as dark as seaweed.

Her lips were parted and small teeth that had the exact translucence of pearls showed for a minute. Brent stared at her lips. They were pink, as pink as seashell, and only a little darker than the color in her cheeks. SHE WAS NOT DEAD.

But what was she doing here, half submerged in water? By what miracle had she escaped drowning, and if she had fainted why were her lips and cheeks red?

HE STOOPED to touch her arm. It was cool, but not cold. Just a delicious, tender coolness, round and white beneath his hand.

She opened startled eyes, for a minute, he thought she would leap to her feet and rush into the ocean. And in that same min-

ute, he knew that he would follow her.

Her eyes were smoke gray at first; like the ocean before sunrise. Then they brightened and changed from gray to aqua to green as suddenly as a wave changes. Her tenseness relaxed and she smiled.

"Who are you?" she asked. Her voice was like muted, silver bells he had heard in the south of Spain.

"I am Brent Belgium." He reached to help her to her feet. "Who are you, and what are you doing here?" The wind was cold through his wool jacket and made him shiver.

But she didn't seem to feel the cold. Yet her hair was wet and she was dressed only in a thin garment of pale gray-green silk.

"I am Nepthae," she said and reached for his hand. "I'll go home with you."

It seemed the natural, the only thing for her to say. Brent was sure that he was dreaming now. No earthly creature could be so beautiful, and where had she learned the name Nepthae? This couldn't be real.

The waves grew higher suddenly, lashed furiously after them. But her hand warmed in his, and her laughter was no dream as they walked up the trail to the big, dark house on the hilltop.

At the entrance, she hesitated a minute, looked across the ocean, smiled at its roaring, then gave a wave. "I love you, you know," she said simply, and walked ahead of him into the house.

THEY were married the next day in what still seemed a dream. He knew only that her name was Nepthae, and that heaven and earth held nothing besides her face, her eyes and her silvery voice. She was lovely in every way. Strange, mysterious, enchanting. Brent didn't ask or care that she never told him anything about herself.

Where, and even if she *had* been born, she never mentioned. Where she came from and who her antecedents. If she had relatives or friends, he didn't know. He only knew that life was more beautiful with her.

The first morning she watched as he ate his egg; tasted her own, smiled and ate a mouthful. He stared at her. One could think that she had never seen bacon and eggs before.

It was the same with everything. Best of all, she loved raw fruits and vegetables. Her eyes were surprised and delighted when she tasted her first orange, pear, apple and grapes; and she couldn't seem to get enough of these.

A few days after they were married, Nancy, the cook, brought in a platter of abalone.

She beamed as she said, "I hope this is right, Mr. Belgium."

With the steaks she served raw spinach salad, broiled tomatoes and small, new potatoes sprinkled with parsley.

Nepthae looked interestedly at the platter before helping herself.

"Um-m-m," Brent sighed. "Abalone. The first of the season, Nepthae, and no one cooks it like Nancy. Beaten just right, neither too much nor too little. You'll love it."

Nepthae stared at him and her face paled. "Abalone!" she said in horror. "But I—couldn't eat abalone, why—" She began to weep and left the table.

Brent, puzzled yet tender, tried to comfort her; and when he saw her horror, refused the steaks himself. And it was the same with all seafood. When he realized how she felt, he instructed Nancy to buy no more.

They must go shopping the day after they were married. Nepthae had only the soft, silky dress she had worn when he found her. She made no explanation as to why she had no other clothes.

But she had unerring taste. Everything she bought was soft blues, aquas and greens, or silvery gray, and some things she found the exact color of the ocean at sunrise.

And she was so lovely. Half the time Brent knew it was true and the other half he was sure he was dreaming. No one on earth could give such happiness. He would sit for hours just looking at her, or listening to her speak. Her voice rippled like the waters at low tide on a smooth, sandy beach. But sometimes she sang and her voice must have been that of a mermaid. It was like nothing on earth.

THE third morning Brent awoke lazily; smiled and still half asleep reached for Nepthae. She wasn't there! He reached still farther, patted the bed all over, then opened his eyes and sat up. She wasn't even in the room!

"Darling," he called.

There was no answer.

"Nepthae. Sweetheart; where are you?"

Still no answer.

He dressed hurriedly and went through the house looking for her. He met Nancy in the dining-room. "Have you seen Nepthae?" he tried to smile as he asked.

"She said she was going swimming," Nancy returned his smile.

Brent turned and ran from the room. The tide was low at this season, but the undercurrents were always strong along this rugged coast. Nepthae shouldn't have gone out alone. Was she a good swimmer? Did she know the sea well enough to be trusted out alone, and why had she gone so early?

As he walked down to the

shore, Brent remembered something and stopped. She must have gone swimming every morning. When he would awake she lay quietly beside him, but her hair was strangely damp as if—Of course! She had slipped up to swim, and returned before he awoke. No need to be afraid. She was certainly a good swimmer.

But she was nowhere in sight. He walked up and down the shore; avoiding seaweed, jellyfish and the debris that had washed up during the night.

"Nepthae!" he called. "Darling, are you hiding from me?"

The water echoed her name; the surf brought it to shore, but there was no answer. He returned to the house and found his binoculars.

As he came outside, he noticed her footprints leading to the shore and followed them. They trailed across the wet said to where the waves came in and ended. She had gone into the water, but was somewhere—far out of sight.

Not even when Ingrid divorced him, had Brent felt such grief; such heartache. No one could stay in the ocean this long and not drown or—there were sharks out there!

Hopelessly, he put the glasses to his eyes and carefully scanned the distant waves. It must have been five miles from shore that he saw and recognized that silvery hair. The glasses brought her close. She dived, stayed under an incredibly long time—or perhaps the waves hid her; then she came up to swim and dive again.

She threw back her head and seemed to be singing—or talking to someone, and her face was young, beautiful, happy. Not once did she look towards the shore.

THERE was a shallow, sandy cove below the house. Brent kept his boats there. He ran down, climbed into a motorboat and started the motor. A wind came from the West and the waves grew higher; roared as they came in. They must have drowned the noise of the boat, for Nepthae didn't turn as he cut the motor and coasted towards her.

Her light, happy voice came to him above the roar of the waves. She WAS talking to someone. But just then she turned, saw him and her face lighted. She swam towards the boat, pulled up and slipped into it to kiss him with wet, salty lips. "Brent," she was distressed. "Darling, I forgot and stayed too long."

"You—you might have been drowned," he choked. "It is too much to swim this far and expect to get home safely. Nepthae, you don't know these waters. They are treacherous—"

She threw back her head and

shouted with laughter, then she sobered and was her gentle self again. "Don't worry darling," she said. "I'll never drown, Brent. Never be afraid that I will drown."

"Some of the best swimmers have thought that." He tried to be stern.

But she only smiled, kissed him and smiled again. He pulled the cord to start the motor. But something was wrong. It was silent. The boat was drifting farther and farther from shore. Something; some malignant monster underwater seemed to have it and to forcibly pull it towards the distant horizon.

Nepthae was still smiling while he, distressed, then afraid as the boat increased its speed, frantically tried again and again to start the motor. At the speed they were going they would soon be adrift far out at sea.

"Darling, can't you understand?" he said at last. "We are being towed out to sea by something. Perhaps a fish has caught his fins in the bottom of the boat; though how, I don't know."

She stopped smiling and put her hand on his. "It's only Sesprae," she said, and gazed at him a minute. "You want to return to shore?" she asked.

"Of course," he said.

She sighed, then began to smile again. "Sesprae," she leaned over the side of the boat, "let us go."

LATER, Brent was sure that he had dreamed this. But the boat stopped its swift flight through the water; the motor started, he turned and sputtered back to shore.

But he knew by now that he hadn't dreamed Nepthae. She grew sweeter, dearer all of the time. She was distressed if he worried over her long swims; so now, if he awoke to find her gone, he waited quietly for her to return.

Once she was gone for two days before she came in smiling, quiet, but happy to be with him. And by now he was afraid to ask questions. There was nothing wrong in what she did, he knew. No one could look into her face, see the adoration for him, and believe that she would be unfaithful.

He learned that her love was not only sweet, but savage. Once, some people came to see them. Lura Daniels and Fern Donaldson, friends of Ingrid and almost as beautiful, were in the crowd. As usual they kissed Brent, laughed, then sobered to talk of Ingrid for a moment.

Nepthae's eyes were pure green. Brent saw the fire smouldering in them. But she smiled quietly, accepted the astounded compliments of the men, and was civil to the girls.

When they were gone, she flew into a rage. She fell on the bed

and wept. Pushed her beautiful hair back from her face and lay on her pillow. "They kissed you," she cried. "They kissed you, and you liked it!"

"But, Nepthae, it didn't mean anything."

"It meant something to me!" passionately.

"But everyone—"

"I'm not like everyone," she wept again. "You don't love me. I can't make you happy. Make you forget—" Then her eyes widened. "Who was Ingrid?" she asked.

He was forced to tell her. She grew quiet, pale, her eyes changed to turgid, molten gray. "You still love her?" she asked evenly.

"You know that I love you." His voice was harsh.

"How," she whispered, "how can I be sure? Prove your love, Brent."

"What can I do?" he asked helplessly. "If you don't believe me, how can I prove it?"

She looked at him a minute, then ran from the room. He saw her swimming out to sea a few minutes later and walked the floor, brooding, worried, fearful.

Two hours later she came back. Sweet, quiet, tender. He was so glad to see her that he forgot her outburst of temper.

The next day his aunt called from Dallas. "Your uncle Roger is dying," she said, her voice low but controlled. "He wants to see you before he goes, and to meet your wife."

"What is it?" Nepthae stood at his shoulder as he talked. Briefly, he told her.

Nepthae's face paled. She was silent a minute, then her eyes began to shine. "I'll go," she whispered. "I'll go with you."

"If you only knew," she told him when he hung up. "If you knew how I shall suffer, Brent, you'd know how much I love you."

"But they're my people, darling. They will love you. No need to be afraid of them."

"I—wasn't thinking of them," she said.

UNCLE ROGER was weak, but he smiled gallantly. took Nepthae's hand and kissed it. "How do you do it?" he asked Brent. "And where did you find her?"

"I found him," Nepthae smiled.

"Tell us about her, Brent," his aunt asked later, while Nepthae took a bath. "She's the loveliest thing I ever saw, but where *did* you find her?"

"I found her asleep," he said. "On the beach, below my house."

He spread his hands. "I have told you all that I know." But he was still smiling.

Nepthae grew gentler, sweeter, more subdued. It was a week before he noticed that she had paled

and her face was full of suffering. When he asked her what was wrong, she only smiled at him, put her hand over his and whispered, "I love you Brent."

It was then he noticed her hand. It was limp, and beginning to shrivel as a rose petal left in the sun. He stared at her face. It had the same look. "Darling!" he cried. "Tell me. Are you ill?"

She shook her head but her eyes filled with tears.

"What is it?" he urged. "Tell me, Nepthae."

"But your uncle. We can't leave him."

"I can leave anyone for you," fiercely.

"Brent," her little soft, withered hand touched his cheek, rested on his shoulder. "I," her voice was weak, just a whisper, "I must get back to the ocean."

He gave her a long, questioning look, kissed her and went to the telephone. He hoped that his uncle would understand and forgive him.

Shortly, he and Nepthae were on a plane for San Francisco.

She was getting weaker. He looked at her with fear. She was almost limp as he helped her into the taxi he had called. In the hour it took to drive from the airport to his home, she visibly grew weaker.

He handed the driver a handfull of bills, took Nepthae in his arms and ran towards the rocky beach. Her eyes were closed and he was afraid she had ceased breathing. But a big wave came in, pounded against the rocks and blew spray into their faces.

Nepthae opened her eyes, smiled and reached her hands towards the water.

Gently, he put her in the same place where he had found her. The waves roared louder, lashed angrily about and over her, seemed hesitant to recede and leave her. Foam gathered in her silvery hair and water sucked about her as she lay quietly.

Brent sat on a rock and watched with troubled eyes. A little color came into her cheeks and her eyes lost their dead, sick look. The biggest wave of all roared in, splashed over her, took her up and lifted her into the ocean. She gathered strength, threw back her head and began to swim.

Brent was ready to cast himself after her, let the waves take him also with no effort at swimming. But she looked back at him, smiled joyously and called, "I'll be back, wait for me."

He ate when he knew he must, slept when he was so tired that his body would no longer keep him going, and walked the beach. With Nepthae gone, his life was gone, only blackness was left.

A WEEK later, he arose after a sleepless night and started across the beach for his daily

vigil. The salt spray spewed up from the rocks and the wind whipped his hair about his face. It was just at this moment that he saw her. Perhaps he had gone mad and was imagining things. But he raced across the rocky shore.

She might have been sleeping and comfortable in her sleep. The blue-green shadows were in her silvery hair and her skin was younger and pinker than ever. She opened her eyes and smiled at him. "I'll go home with you, darling," she said.

Life was more wonderful than when he first had her. Days and nights were full of enchantment. Brent didn't ask or care where she had been; who or what she was.

They had never been out on the yacht. Nepthae had seemed only to wish to stay in the big house near the shore. But one day, laughing, she suggested they take a cruise.

Just before he hauled up anchor, Brent thought he saw a woman walking along the shore and there was the sound of voices. But he was busy, and when he looked a few minutes later there was no one there.

The first day and night, Nepthae was wild with excitement. She was in and out of the ocean, leaping from the deck, then climbing back; her hair and eyes bright. "You really love me, Brent?" she asked more than once. "More than anything on earth?"

"Really," he told her gravely.

"Enough to—" She regarded him just as gravely, but hesitated.

"Enough to go with me for always?"

"Enough to go with you for always," he said.

"Do you regret coming to me?" he asked.

"Of course not, but—"

"Yes?"

"But I am still near—" she paused, leaned her head on his shoulder and was silent.

He didn't ask what she meant.

The moon was bright on the waters. Nepthae had gone to her cabin for a minute. Brent heard her coming softly up behind him. He turned, held out his arms and she ran into them. His lips found hers and he kissed her. An old madness stirred in him for one minute, then he tried to shove her away as he said, "Ingrid! how did you get here?"

He heard a startled gasp, then a sob behind him and turned to see Nepthae, her eyes wide and sick in the moonlight.

"I have been here since you left shore," Ingrid said. "I came because I want you back, Brent. Because I know, and you know that we belong together."

"It is true," Nepthae moaned. "I knew it." She ran towards the rail.

Brent ran faster. He caught her fiercely to him as she started to climb over the rail. "No," he cried. "No, darling, it's you I love, Nepthae!"

"How can I know?" she gasped. "How can I be sure?"

"How can I make you sure?" he pleaded.

"I'll—I'll try you," she whispered, strong and relentless as a wave as she eluded his grasp and plunged into the ocean.

"Nepthae!" he called in despair and started to follow her.

"If you follow now, you'll never find me, Brent," she said. Then she smiled. "But wait for me, darling. I'll be back."

He took the boat back to shore; sent Ingrid finally and firmly away.

Then he waited a week, a month, a year.

Another year and five more went by. He ate and slept. Walked the beach to eat and sleep again. He knew that people were beginning to call him, "The queer man in the big house on the hill," but he didn't care.

Nepthae had said, "I'll come back." And she would surely come back. But he worried a little as he noticed that he was beginning to change. His black hair was getting as white as hers with its silvery depths. What if she did not love him when she came?

TEN years from the day he first saw her, Brent walked along the rocky beach. The salt spray blew against his face and the wind whipped his hair.

She was in exactly the same spot, and she was younger and more beautiful than ever. She smiled as she opened her eyes. "You did wait for me, didn't you?" she said.

He was on his knees beside her, the waves lapping about them both. "I could do nothing else," he told her and he was weeping as he kissed her.

"You will come with me?" she asked.

"I will come with you."

He swam beside her into the ocean. They were far, far out to sea and he was growing stronger. He felt a new, young, fierce happiness as he swam beside her. She laughed at him, and reached to kiss his lips.

The waves grew fiercer. Boiled and billowed around them. But he was beginning to see through the depths. Far away, he saw the white columns and blue spires of a city. The walls shone as if they were made of pearl.

"You will never regret it?" Nepthae asked.

"I have you," was his answer.

She took his hand, pulled him to her and they began to sink, to flow towards the gates of the city.

*BY ELIZABETH SHELDON*

**Heading by Vincent Napoli**

*. . . done to death by the ghost of a person who was still alive.*

I SUPPOSE few people will believe the story of Miriam Tromley's death and its sequel, even today. That is why I had never told of the strange things I had seen, either at the inquest or afterward. I might have confessed it to the police, shrieked it aloud on Broadway. Who would have believed me then? But the time is not far off when the world will know that such things can be.

I was Evelyn's stenographer for three years. It was a queer job. I guess old Parton, whose name adorned the title page of the magazine, hardly knew how he came to be an editor. It had started as a sort of advertisement bulletin for his cereals and tinned food; then Miriam Tromley came to be his secretary. She had been an editor on a woman's magazine. She was a nervous little woman with all sorts of half-baked talents, and the first thing old Parton knew she had turned his biscuit literature into a magazine.

The magazine—*Mother and Child,* you must remember it—grew larger and thicker until it needed another worker in the editorial department. Miriam Tromley had a friend who, according to her own tale, was in the hardest kind of ill-luck at the time, and she convinced stingy old Parton that *Mother and Child* needed her afflicted friend's services. That friend was Evelyn Renard. This all happened about a year before they took me on. When I arrived on the scene, Evelyn had been promoted from assistant to co-editor. When I went in answer to their advertisement for a stenographer it was Evelyn Renard who interviewed me. I remember so well my first impression of her. She seemed to have risen hastily as I entered, and stood at her desk ill at ease, although I was only a prospective stenographer. I felt as if she had hurriedly concealed something as I entered. I do not mean this literally, it was just the impression of something furtive about the woman herself. When you were in the room with her she did not look at you, she watched you like an animal ready to anticipate the movement of its enemy. I always felt something reptilian about her, and strange to say, she had a liking for snakes instead of the repulsion most of us feel for them.

I always felt sorry for Miriam Tromley. She lacked repose, a frail, faded little woman, neither young nor old. She knew twice as much as her co-editor, but she lacked assurance; whereas Evelyn

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Renard was a raw, shameless and brilliant faker. No one knew anything about her antecedents. She laid claim to a millionaire French-Canadian father who had lost his money in disastrous speculations.

She engaged me at an unusually small salary, but I was not in a position to be particular just then. I afterward learned that Evelyn had done some very efficient work reducing the salaries of the entire staff after her promotion, although she always attributed this policy to some hard-hearted power above her.

For a time I lost sight of my first disagreeable impression of her, for Evelyn, as I have said, was friendly with all the office employees, and she told such pathetic stories about herself that everyone pitied her. Even hard old Parton made her work as easy as possible, while Miriam Tromley, who had an income of her own, was always responding to some dire need of Evelyn's, and incidentally spent hours doing Evelyn's work—for which she received scant thanks.

OLD PARTON had had rather a fancy for Miriam Tromley at the start. At the time Evelyn appeared upon the scene, Miss Sampson says, they all thought he would marry her, but after Evelyn came Miriam's influence declined. She made him believe that Miriam was inefficient. It did not come about too quickly. Miriam never suspected, but no one else was much surprised when Evelyn Renard was put over her. Evelyn was then editor-in-chief. When that happened we could all prophesy the next step, which would, of course, be the total exit of Miriam.

We all knew it but Miriam. She seemed restless and a little anxious at times, but, whatever she may have feared she was never suspicious of Evelyn. By that time I had begun to lose my sympathy with our afflicted employer; I had seen too much of the inner working of her office politics.

"She'll make a grand political boss when women really get their teeth into politics," said Miss Sampson the day we uncovered the maternity corset graft that was going on the woman's page.

ONE day when Miss Renard was ill I went to her apartment to take some dictation, and afterward she got talking. She said she was lonely. I think she was afraid to be alone. Anyway, she indulged in some of the wildest flights of fancy I ever heard from a sane person.

"One day, Miss Morton," she said, "I went into my room and saw myself lying on the bed. Now what do you think of that?"

I thought at the time, "My

dear Madam, I'd hate to tell you what I think of it!" And I remembered my first impression—that there was something uncanny about Evelyn Renard. Also, I don't believe she ever had an idea in her life. I don't think she wanted to have one. She preferred to use her neighbor's. Evelyn liked the idea of having other people do her work for her.

When the exposure of the maternity corset graft came, of course Evelyn contrived to keep her skirts clear of it. I don't know how much old Parton was on to the mechanism of it, but I was wise to it from the beginning, and I don't believe Evelyn ever knew that I knew. If she did, what a fool she must have thought me not to have blackmailed her out of a good income with my knowledge! That is what she would have done in my place.

Occasionally I used to catch glimpses of Miriam Tromley looking worried and anchorless, coming in and out of the office. She had not been able to get another position. She used to come in to see Evelyn at times when she knew old Parton would be out. Evelyn had succeeded in making a complete breach between them. At the same time she sympathized ardently with Miriam for the injustice that had been done her.

"Men are like that," I heard her say one day in accents of bitter sympathy to Miriam. "The more you do for them the more they expect. You poor dear! You worked yourself to death for old Parton and this is what you get for it."

I HAVE never known just the nature of the next crooked deal that Evelyn put over. It was an opportunity that came to her in some way through the office. Some dishonorable use that she made of inside information. She covered her tracks to the end. The trouble came because she began to be afraid that Miriam knew about it, and as a result to be haunted by the fear of exposure.

Miriam had come in one day while Evelyn was having a conference with an advertising man. She was obliged to go with the man into another office, leaving Miriam alone beside her desk with her papers spread out on top of it.

I think that was the beginning of her suspicion that Miriam knew what she was up to, although I knew that Miss Tromley was incapable of reading other people's letters. From that day on I could see that Evelyn was afraid of Miriam. Later I knew that she hated her. I imagine that people like Evelyn Renard always hate those who have given them their start, especially when they have

done their benefactor an injury in return.

Of course there was something in those papers that Evelyn had reason to be very nervous about. I had known for some time that she had papers which she kept locked up as if she were in the secret service.

ONE afternoon after leaving the office I found that I had left behind a pile of manuscripts I had to read, and I went back to get them.

As I opened the door of Miss Renard's office I distinctly saw her at her desk drawing out a paper from a drawer that she always kept locked.

"Why, Miss Renard, I thought you had left long ago!" I exclaimed. As I walked in I knocked against a pile of books and papers on the corner of a desk and they began to fall to the floor. I bent to pick them up, and when I rose again—about the space of two seconds—Miss Renard was gone. She must have slipped out the other door, but how she managed it so noiselessly I don't know.

I told her about it the next day, and while I was telling it I noticed a curious sort of glitter in her eyes—snake-like I called it to myself. She dismissed me and my anecdote a little shortly.

"You were day-dreaming, Miss Morton; I was in a suburban train on my way to Rye at that time yesterday, and asleep at that. I nearly went past my station."

As it happened I had proof afterward that she had told me the truth, for Miss Sampson who lives in Mt. Vernon was on the same train, but all the same I felt sure that Evelyn Renard was living some sort of a double life, for I saw some queer goings on in those days.

For one thing I felt sure that she "shadowed" Miriam Tromley. Miriam had finally found an advertising position of some sort, and did not come in so often. When she did, Evelyn's dread was most apparent. There was certainly something that she was terribly afraid to have Miriam find out. Twice after dark I saw her following Miriam, always at a little distance behind her, and walking more noiselessly than you would believe a human being could walk.

One day when Miriam had left the office I caught Evelyn looking after her with an expression that actually made me shiver. She must have noticed the look on my face, for she quietly rearranged her features and said with the sweetest tone of false sympathy—one I had come to know so well:

"Dear Miss Tromley is not looking so well. Haven't you noticed it? I am really troubled about her."

I muttered that I hadn't noticed it especially, and as our eyes met I knew with a sense of chill along my spine, that the editor of *Mother and Child* wished that her former benefactor was dead.

The next day I overheard part of a conversation between them that seemed rather to give reality to Evelyn's fears, which I had taken to be just the imaginary alarms of a guilty conscience.

"You are making a mistake, Evelyn," I heard Miriam say, "and if I can't make you see it I will have to take some other means of stopping it."

Then Evelyn's voice, rasping and hard, "Go ahead—I don't care! You needn't think that you can down me—"

That was all I heard, but enough to know that Miriam seemed to be threatening some sort of exposure, and that Evelyn's mood was determined and defiant.

I did not know what it was about then. Afterward I was able to make a shrewd guess.

THE next day was the strangest in my life. Afterward I wondered if I had lost my reason temporarily, if I had suffered from delusions, but now I understand. . . . I will tell it exactly as it happened.

In the first place it leaked out —as such things usually do—that Evelyn had hooked old Parton. They were to be married quietly the next day. It had long been a betting proposition in the office, with the odds on Evelyn's side. At least all the women except the new flapper stenog had bet on her.

Just before five o'clock, Miriam called to see Evelyn and was refused. The editor's door was closed to all visitors. Something in the make-up had to be changed at the last minute, and Evelyn had ordered her dinner sent in. She was going to work until she was through, she said, and short of a bomb explosion or a fire in the building—so she instructed the night operator—no one was to knock on her door.

As I stood inside the street entrance pursuing an elusive dime in the depths of my bag, I caught sight of the dismissed Miriam hanging indecisively on the outskirts of the hurrying crowd. I remembered afterward her bewildered disconsolate expression and, what I had not realized before, the peculiar indecision, the marked weakness of the face. It occurred to me that she had in some way depended upon Evelyn's hard selfish strength, and that without her she was rudderless, like a lost dog without its master.

Just as I had captured my dime and started to go, the elevator came down and I saw Evelyn—supposedly locked up in her office

at work, slip out and pass silently out to the street.

It did not surprise me. I think I always expected Evelyn to have some different purpose from the one she openly owned up to, and I should have thought nothing of it if it had not been for Miriam's strange treatment of her.

Evelyn walked directly up to Miriam, but Miriam simply stared straight into her face and walked past as if she were not there at all. I don't mean that Miriam cut her, but that she looked — or seemed to look — directly at the spot where Evelyn stood without seeing her. Certainly Miriam must be in some disturbed state of mind for such absent-mindedness to be possible when faced by the very person she had come to see!

Miriam turned toward Fifth Avenue; Evelyn followed at a short distance, and, my curiosity and apprehension now thoroughly awake, I followed them both.

Evelyn did not make any effort to overtake Miriam. She slipped quietly after her through the crowd in an eel-like way she had, so close behind I marvelled that Miriam never once saw her. She did seem to have some sense of being followed. Twice she turned and looked back, but (I remembered afterward) although the second time she caught sight of me and bowed, she never once saw Evelyn.

I followed them all the way to Miriam's apartment in Greenwich Village. She lived in a sort of studio building, an old house with dark winding halls. And never once during that strange walk did Miriam discover that Evelyn was following her. Never once did Evelyn discover me!

At the door of her apartment Miriam paused to let herself in, while Evelyn drew back into the shadow.

I waited farther back, near the stairs. It was not long before Miriam came out again—to go to her dinner perhaps, or to get something to cook at home. I saw Evelyn creep nearer. There was only a dim gas-jet burning far down the hall; otherwise the place was almost dark.

As Miriam stood in the doorway of her room, a pathetic little silhouette against the light, at last Evelyn went openly up to her and spoke. At least I thought she spoke, although I heard no sound. Miriam turned to look at her vaguely. . . . without surprise. Evelyn seemed to be urging her to do something, and Miriam listened with her eyes cast down like one in thought, but she did not answer.

After a moment she turned back into her room, and noiselessly Evelyn slipped through the door after her, close on her heels.

They left it open. I stood on the threshold of Miriam's apartment uneasy and irresolute, watching them. Still without speaking, Miriam went to the bathroom, turned on the light, took a small bottle from the medicine cabinet and picked up a glass, while silent Evelyn watched. I could see it all from where I stood. And still neither of them spoke, only the place seemed filled with the electric pulsations of Evelyn's will.

I saw Miriam pour the contents of the vial into a glass; then for a moment she seemed to hesitate, and in that interval Miriam seemed to grow vague and weak, while Evelyn became strong, tall, terrific. . . . She was advising Miriam, but it was advice that was more like a threat or a command. Even then I did not suspect. How could I have understood? I knew nothing of these things then. . . . not until Miriam raised the glass to her lips—not until it fell from her nerveless fingers, and I saw her turn with a dazed face half falling into a chair, did I realize what the glass must have contained. . . .

She saw me then, she called my name. I jumped forward just in time to save her from falling, then turned to Evelyn just as she was escaping from the room. I sprang after her and caught her wrist, but it slipped from my grasp. . . . something cool and light. . . . not solid. . . . yet cold, with a curious indescribable coldness . . . For a long time I could feel the sensation of it, like menthol on my hand. Then I bent over Miriam — she was totally unconscious.

I found an art student in a neighboring studio. We got the poor girl into her bed and telephoned for a doctor, but he was too late. It was cyanide, and death had been instantaneous.

AND now I come to the strangest part of my story. After I got home that night about nine o'clock, I rang up Miss Wharton, Mr. Parton's secretary, to tell her of poor Miriam Tromley's death, and learned that she had gone back to Evelyn's apartment that night at eight o'clock —old Parton had sent her—because he could get no answer from her telephone—and found her in bed in charge of a trained nurse! The doctor had just left. It seemed that Evelyn had had some sort of a seizure while working alone in her office. Miss Wharton (who had not been employed in the office very long) found the case most pathetic.

"No one knows how long she had lain there unconscious, poor soul, all alone, with no one to come to her help! The watchman found her lying beside her desk. He noticed the light and went to investigate."

"The night watchman!"" I repeated. "Do you know what time it was?"

"No, it wasn't the night watchman, it was James. He found her just before he left, and he leaves, doesn't he, at half-past six?"

Half-past six? The very hour of Miriam Tromley's death. For by a curious impulse I had glanced at my wrist watch when the doctor had dropped Miriam's hand and pronounced her dead.

According to that, Evelyn Renard was in her own office at the very moment I had seen her leave Miriam Tromley's apartment forty blocks away!

Almost beside myself, I hung up the receiver without bidding Miss Wharton good-bye and went straight to Evelyn Renard's house and asked for the nurse. She looked a little curious when she saw my face. I think she thought that I was Evelyn's next of kin in a state of distraction.

"I can't imagine what brought on Miss Renard's attack," she said. "She seemed to be in a sort of trance when they found her. She must have been dead set on something, for her face was fixed with the look of a man in a death grip. It was awful to see that look on her white unconscious face. Seemed like she must have been making some big mental drive and just dropped off after it like that."

"They found her about half-past six?" I asked.

The nurse stared as if she found my question odd.

"So I understand," she said and returned to her patient. I could hear her moaning faintly—rather a dreadful sound.

It was a fact then, Evelyn had been in her own office in a fainting-fit at the very hour when I had seen her urging Miriam Tromley to take her own life!

THE marriage was postponed for a time. Three days later Evelyn came back to the office. She went about looking so white and appealing that even the publicity manager pitied her.

"Poor girl, how she feels her friend's death!" he said.

I never told what I had seen. How could I have told it in the face of the facts? With her own hand Miriam Tromley had lifted the glass of poison to her lips. Had I not seen her in the very act?

About a month afterward Evelyn had what the doctors called a nervous breakdown—a breakdown with delusions. She told me one of them a few days before they took her away to the sanitarium. We were alone in the office.

I had just said to her, "You really ought to take a rest, Miss Renard. You are just keeping up on will-power."

And she had answered, "Perhaps I am. It is wonderful what one's will can do." She bent toward me like one telling a secret. "Did you know that you can make your will do things at a distance when you are asleep?"

"What do you mean?" I asked, controlling my impulse to draw back from her.

She leaned nearer with a look I didn't like to meet in her murky eyes. "Why, don't you know? You can go to bed at night and set your will to do something you want to accomplish—miles away—and it will do the thing for you, just as if you were there. Sometimes you can half remember it afterward. . . . like a dream."

I remembered that conversation afterward. . . . when old Parton died.

Evelyn did not stay long in the sanitarium. In two weeks she was back in the office completely restored.

Miriam Tromley had not been dead a month when Evelyn Renard became Evelyn Parton. Summer was approaching. Of course she gave up her job at the office—although she playfully remarked, she should always keep an eye on it—and she did.

Mr. and Mrs. Parton sailed on the newest highest-priced steamer for Europe in June. That was the last we ever saw of old Parton. He died suddenly in an obscure town in Italy, leaving Evelyn his sole heir. She was now sole owner of the business, not to speak of all that it had made.

I feel dreadfully about old Parton's death. How can I do otherwise? If I had told what I had seen it might have saved his life.

He had walked off an upper balcony in his sleep, so they told us. . . . But who had urged him out there. . . . a useless old incumbrance now that his will was made and his fortune safely within Evelyn's grasp?

I can see a dark shadowy figure behind poor old Parton, softly urging him over the brink, a spirit you might call it, a ghost that never died. "Ghosts of the living," the Japanese call them, the soul sent out in sleep. Is not sleep Death's Sister? Evelyn had concentrated upon Miriam's death, willing her to self-destruction. Sometimes it is known as astral murder.

It would appear to be the perfect crime, wouldn't it, evidence upon which no jury would convict? But Evelyn's career did not end with Miriam Tromley, or even with old Parton.

IT SEEMED for a time as if nothing could stop Evelyn. Strange that little Blanche O'Hara should have been the one.

Blanche was MacDonough's

private secretary. MacDonough was our business manager and a very keen man. I am sure he never cared for Evelyn, although of course he was far from guessing what she really was. He was fond of Blanche, whether fond enough to marry her one couldn't tell, but at least his favor made Blanche a person of some consequence, and Evelyn had always feared discovery—strange mixture that she was of iron will and cowardice.

She never dreamed that I suspected her—luckily for me—or I should have gone the way of poor Miriam and old Parton. But for some reason her apprehensions and suspicions fastened upon Blanche. Evelyn more or less took charge of the business after old Parton died. She never had an office in the building, but at least once in the day she would drop in on us—of course at the time she thought she was least expected; and quite often if MacDonough was out, or really busy, this brought her in touch with Blanche.

I don't believe Blanche had the faintest suspicion of what Evelyn was like. She was a frank, straightforward child, with great, clear, rather light blue eyes. Though light, they were very striking, because her eyelashes were long, and dark like her hair. They were rather uncanny eyes, and she had a way of fixing them upon you and leaving them there. She was probably thinking of something else when she did it, most likely MacDonough, but she certainly made you feel as if she was reading your innermost thoughts, piercing your very soul. It would have been a hard thing to lie to Blanche. I could see that her eyes got on Evelyn's nerves. She would do anything rather than meet them.

Blanche was a good kid, clean straight through. Like the heroine in the old-fashioned melodrama, she was the sole support of a widowed mother. But she was not sentimental about it, never made capital out of it, or regretted the necessity to go without little feminine vanities because of it.

It seems that I was predestined to the role of onlooker, for I was the sole witness of that momentous last meeting between Evelyn and Blanche.

It was one of those warmish days in winter when New York offices seem unbearably hot. Evelyn had dropped in at noon when she knew MacDonough would be out. That made me curious to start with, because I knew it meant that this time, instead of avoiding, she wanted to see Blanche. MacDonough did quite a bit of business at luncheon, and consequently was often absent for a long time at that hour. While he was out Blanche was obliged

to be in. Of course Evelyn knew that.

The first thing Evelyn did when she entered was to ask to have the window wide open. It was I who had ushered her in, and I remained near the doorway frankly watching. For some reason Evelyn thought me of no account. She never seemed to notice my comings or goings.

Blanche went to the window and threw it all the way up. Evelyn stole up behind her like a shadow. She never seemed to walk so that we heard her, and she almost always dressed in black. Evelyn leaned against the right-hand side of the window-lenge, Blanche was at the left.

"What a perfectly gorgeous day!" Blanche said, and leaned out, drawing in long breaths.

"What a view from this window!" Evelyn answered. "Why, all those buildings are on Long

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# Witch's Brew

By DOROTHY QUICK

A WITCH'S brew is the Antic Sea
Of incantation and wizardry.
Of white foam edging a narrow shore
With breakers tumbling more and more.
Like a hundred horses with milk white manes
Rushing toward their promised gains.
Of Augean stables and honied meads
That are fit indeed for Neptune's steeds

A witch's brew and a wizard's spell
Are the sea horses that ride the swell
And the storied waves which tower high
To link the water with the sky.
They bruise the land with a giant hoof
That is part of the darkling picture's woof.
For the sea must win in an equal fray
While the witch of time has her own wild way,
And stirs the brew that is tempest tossed
With the hand of a dead man long since lost.

Island! I wonder what that tall tower is."

She pointed to something real or imaginary so far to the north that Blanche had to lean quite far out to see it. The window-ledge was rather low, and it made me nervous to see Blanche do it. I don't know what it was that suddenly made me look from Blanche to Evelyn.

No, Evelyn had no intention of pushing her out, not with her hands. But if you could have seen her eyes! Never so long as I live shall I forget them—a snake's eyes sending out live fires of hatred — hatred and something else. . . .

I knew what it was. It was the thing that must be in a snake's eyes when it is charming the dove to its death.

Farther and farther little Blanche leaned out; a scream rose to my lips, I made a dart forward; then, sharply, Blanche drew in and turned her eyes upon Evelyn. And under her eyes Evelyn seemed to shrink and withdraw within herself, as if like the demon in a fairy story she was going to vanish. But she did not vanish. She stood staring, staring at Blanche, straight into those wide, clear, pure blue eyes.

It was the strangest thing I have ever seen. From her evil murky eyes Evelyn was sending out something, something that was a veritable missile of death, sending it straight into Blanche's eyes. For a moment she was able to send it as a writhing snake may spit out venom in its last hour. But the thing that she sent could not reach its victim. From that clear light it rebounded back to its source, straight into the evil soul that lay behind Evelyn's dark eyes. A boomerang!

She made a wild movement like a creature shot. Blanche screamed; for a second, a dark thing outflung against the sky . . . then silence. Twenty stories below, Evelyn Parton lay on the sidewalk, broken beyond recognition in the midst of the wild panic of the passers-by.

Miriam Tromley was timid and neurotic, Parton was a feeble old man. But Blanche, young, strong, clean of soul, was not vulnerable to Evelyn's evil power, which, deflected from its target, rebounded upon her who sent it, forcing her to the suicidal act she had tried to will Blanche to perform.

When MacDonough married Blanche he took new offices in another building, for never afterward could Blanche bear to go in that room. I think little as she sensed what had happened there, she did realize that she had been very close to the great force of Evil in that place.

*. . . one might get impatient, waiting to be born.*

# BRENDA

*BY MARGARET ST. CLAIR*

BRENDA ALDEN was a product of that aseptic, faintly sadistic, school of child rearing that is already a little old-fashioned. The vacationing parents on Moss Island liked her, and held up her politeness and good manners as examples to their offspring; the children themselves stayed away from her, scenting in her something waspish and irritable. She was tall for her age, and lanky, with limp blonde hair. She always wore slacks.

Monday began like all her days. She had breakfast, was told to keep her elbows off the table, helped with the dishes. Then she was told to go out and play. She sauntered slowly into the woods.

The woods on Moss Island were scattered clumps of birch and denser stands of conifers. There were places where Brenda, if she tried hard, could have the

illusion of a forest, and she liked that. In the western part of the island there was a wide, deep excavation which people said had been a quarry. Nobody ever said what had been quarried out of it.

It was a little before noon when Brenda smelled the rotten smell. It was an intense, bitter, rottenness, almost strangling, and when it first met her nose Brenda's face wrinkled up with distaste. But after a moment her face relaxed. She inhaled, not without eagerness. She decided to try to find the source of the smell. Sometimes she liked to smell and look at rotten things.

Sniffing, she wandered. The smell would be strong and then weak and then strong again. She was just about to give up and turn back—it was hot in the airless, piney pockets, under the sun—when she saw the man.

He was not a tramp, he was not one of the summer people. Brenda knew at once that he was not like any other man she had ever seen. His skin was not black, or brown, but of an inky grayness; his body was blobbish and irregular, as if it had been shaped out of the clots of soap and grease that stop up kitchen sinks. He held a dead bird in one crude hand. The rotten smell was welling out from him.

Brenda stared at him, her heart pounding. For a moment she was almost too frightened to move. She stood gasping and licking her lips. Then he extended an arm toward her. She turned and ran.

She heard the noise, she smelled the smell, as he came stumbling after her. Her lungs hurt. There was a stitch in her side. She tripped over a root, fell to her knees, and was up again. She ran on. Only when she was almost too exhausted to go further did she look back.

HE WAS more distant then she had hoped, though he was still coming. For a second she stood panting, her narrow sides going in and out. He was still separated from her by some fifty feet. She blinked. Then her lips curved in what was almost a smile. She turned to the right, in the direction of the quarry, and began running again, though more leisurely.

There was a thicket of poison oak; she skirted it. She stooped for a pine cone, and then another one, thrust them into the waistband of her trousers, and went on with her steady trotting. He was still following. The light seemed to hurt his eyes; his head hung forward almost on his chest. Then they were on the edge of the quarry, and Brenda must try her plan.

She was no longer afraid—or, at any rate, only a little so. Exer-

tion had washed her sallow cheeks with an unaccustomed red. Carefully she tossed one of the pine cones over the steep quarry side so that it landed halfway toward the bottom and then rolled on down. With more force she threw the second cone; it hit well beyond the first and slid toward the bottom in a rattle of loose stones and dirt. Then, very quickly and lightly, Brenda ran to the left and crouched behind a tree.

The noise of the pine cones had been not unlike that of a runner plunging over the quarry edge and down into the depths. Brenda's pursuer halted, turning his head from side to side blindly, and seeming to sniff the air. She felt a moment of intense anxiety. She was almost sure he couldn't catch her, even if he started after her again. But—oh—he was so—

One of the pine cones slid a few feet further. He seemed to listen. Then he went over the edge after the sound of it.

BRENDA'S heart was shaking the flat bosom of her shirt. While the rotten-smelling man stumbled back and forth among the dusty rocks in the quarry bottom hunting her, she waited and listened. It took him a long time to abandon the search. But at last the moment for which Brenda had been waiting came. He left his hunting and began to struggle up the quarry side.

He slid back. Brenda leaned forward, tense and expectant. Her eyes were bright. He started up again. Once more he slid back.

It was clear to the watching child much sooner than it was to the man in the depths of the quarry that he was imprisoned. He kept starting up the sides clumsily, clawing at the loose handholds, and sliding back. But his blobbish limbs were extraordinarily inept and awkward. He always slid back.

At last he gave up and stood quiet. His head dropped. He made no sound. But the penetrating rottenness was welling out from him.

Brenda got to her feet and walked toward him. Her pale lips were curving in a grin. "Hi!" she called over the edge of the quarry. "Hi! You can't get out, can you?"

The mockery in her tone seemed to cut through to his dull senses. He raised his grayish head. There was a flash of teeth, very white against their inky background. But he couldn't get out. After a moment, Brenda laughed.

Brenda hugged her secret to herself all the rest of the day. She was reprimanded for being late to lunch: her father said she needed discipline. She was not

bothered. That night she slept soundly and well.

Early next morning she went to see Charles. Charles was a year older than she, and tolerated her better than anyone else on Moss Island. Once he had given her a cast-off snake skin. She had kept it in the drawer with her handkerchiefs.

Today he was making a cloud-chamber with rubbing alcohol, a jar, and a piece of dry ice. Brenda squatted down beside him and watched. After five minutes or so she said, "I know what's more fun than that."

"What?" Charles asked, without looking up from his manipulations.

"Something I found. Something funny. Scary. Queer."

The exchange continued. Brenda hinted. Charles was mildly curious. At last she said, "Come and see it, Chet. It's not like anything you ever saw before. Come on." She laid her hand on his arm.

UP UNTIL that moment, Charles might have accompanied her. The cloud chamber was not going well, and he did not actively dislike the girl. But the dryness and tensity of her touch on his arm—the touch of a person who has never received or given a pleasant physical contact—repelled him. He drew away from her hand. "I don't want to see it. It isn't anything anyway. Just some sort of junk. I'm not interested," he said.

"But you'd like it! Please come and see."

"I told you, I'm not interested. I'm not going to go. Can't you take a hint? Go away."

When he used that tone, Brenda knew there was no use in arguing with him. She got up and walked off.

After lunch her father had her help him with the barbecue pit he was building. While she shoveled dirt and mixed concrete her thoughts were busy with the man in the quarry. Was he still standing motionless at the bottom, or was he once more stumbling back and forth hunting her? Or was he trying to clamber up the sides again? He'd never make it, no matter how much he tried. But if he stayed there long enough, some of the other children might find him. Would they be more frightened than she had? She didn't know. She couldn't form any mental picture of what might happen then.

When her father knocked off work for the day, she lay down in the hammock. Her hands were sore and her back ached, but she couldn't relax. Finally, though it was almost supper time, she got up and walked off quickly toward the quarry.

He was still there. Brenda let out a deep breath of relief. The

bitter, rotten smell hung strong in the air. She must have made a noise, for he raised his head and then let it drop forward again on his chest. Other than that, he was motionless.

Charles wouldn't come to see him. So . . . Brenda looked around her. Farther along the edge of the quarry, twenty feet or so from where she was standing, were two long boards. She measured their length with her eyes.

It was thirty feet or more to the bottom of the quarry. The boards were not quite long enough. But the zone of loose, sliding stuff did not extend all the way up; once the man in the excavation was past it, he ought to be able to get up easily enough. Charles had said that what she had found wasn't anything. Just some junk. Brenda began to move the boards.

Her hands were sore, but the boards themselves were not heavy. In fifteen minutes or so she had laid a narrow path from the bottom of the quarry to within a few feet of the top. *He*—the man—had done nothing while she worked, not even watched her. But underneath her shirt Brenda's narrow body was trembling and wet with sweat. She had had to get closer to him than she had liked while she was putting down the second board.

She stood back. The man in the quarry did not move. Brenda felt a moment of anxious exasperation. Wasn't he going to do anything, after all her trouble? "Come on!" she said under her breath and then, more loudly, "Come on!"

The sun was beginning to decline toward the west. The shadows lengthened. The man below turned his head from side to side, as if the waning light had brought him a keener perception. One blobby gray hand went up. Then he started toward the boards.

Brenda waited until his uncertain feet were set upon the second of the lengths of wood. She could stand it no longer. She whirled about and ran as hard as she could toward home. She did not know whether or not he followed her.

BRENDA did not go to the woods next morning. She hung around the house until her mother sent her out to help her father, who sent her back, saying that he had got to a place in his construction where she could be only in the way. Brenda went to the kitchen and got herself a sandwich and a glass of milk. When she came back with them her mother, pale and disturbed, was on the terrace outside the house talking to her father. Brenda went to the door

and leaned her head against it.

"I don't see how it could be a tramp," her mother was saying. "Elizabeth said nothing had been taken. She was quite emphatic. Only the roast chicken. And even it hadn't been eaten, only torn into pieces." She hesitated. "She said there were spots of grayish slime all over it."

"Elizabeth exaggerates," Brenda's father answered. He gave the mortar he was smoothing an impatient pat. "What's her idea anyway, if it wasn't a tramp? Who else would break in her kitchen? There are only the six families on Moss Island."

"I don't think she has any definite idea. Oh, Rick, I wish you could have heard her talking. She mentioned the dreadful smell over and over. She said she was phoning the other families to warn them. She sounded afraid."

"Probably hysterical," he answered contemptuously. His eye fell on Brenda, standing in the shadow of the door. "Go up to your room, Brenda," he said sharply. "Stay there. I won't have you listening behind doors."

"Yes, father."

Brenda did not resent the order. She was afraid. Would Charles remember her hints of yesterday, connect them with the raid on Mrs. Emsden's kitchen (the man from the quarry must be hungry—but he hadn't eaten the chicken) and tell on her? Or would something worse happen, she didn't know what?

She moved about her room restlessly. The bed was made, there was nothing for her to do. She could hear the rumble of her parents' voices indistinctly, a word now and then rising into prominence. For the first time she felt a sharp curiosity about the man who had been in the quarry, about the man himself.

She got out her diary and opened it. But it wouldn't do; the volume had no lock, and she knew her mother read it. She never wrote anything important in it.

She looked at the scribbled pages with dislike. It would be nice to be able to tear them out and crumple them up in the wastepaper basket. But her mother would notice and ask her why she had destroyed her pretty book. No. . . .

She hunted about the room until she found a box of note paper. Using the lid of the box as a desk, she printed carefully across the top of one of the narrow gray sheets: THE MAN.

She hesitated. Then she wrote: "1. Where did he come from?"

She licked her pencil. The idea was hard to put into words. But she wanted to see it written out on the paper. She began, erased, began again. Finally she wrote, "I think he came to Moss Island from the main land. I think he

came over one night last month when the tide was so low. I think he came here by acci—" She erased. "By mistake."

Brenda was ready for the second question. "Why does he stay on the island?" she scribbled. She was writing faster now. "I think because he can not swim. The water would—" she paused, conscious that the exact word she wanted was not in her vocabulary. At last she wrote, "Would wash him away."

She got out another sheet of note paper. At the top she printed, "THE MAN Page 2." She bit into the pencil shank judiciously. Then she wrote, "What kind of a man is he? I think he is not like other people. Not like us. He is a different kind of a man."

She had written the last words slowly. Now inspiration came. She scribbled, "He is not like us because he likes dead things to eat. Things that have been dead for much—" an erasure—"for a long time. I think that is why he came to M.I. in the first place. Hunting. He is old. Has been the way he is for a long time."

She put the pencil down. She seemed to have finished. Her mother must have gone out: the noise of her parents' voices had ceased, and the house was perfectly quiet. Outside, she could hear the faint slap slap of her father's trowel as he worked on the concrete.

There was a long pause. Brenda sat motionless. Then she picked up the pencil again and wrote at the bottom of the page, very quickly, "I think he would help me to be born."

She picked up what she had written and looked at it. Then she took the two pages and went with them into the bathroom. She tore them into small pieces and flushed them down the drain.

SUPPER that night was quiet. Once Brenda's mother started to say something about Elizabeth Emsden, and was stopped by her father's warning frown. Brenda helped with the dishes. Just before she went upstairs to bed, she slipped into her parents' bedroom, which was on the ground floor, and unlatched the window screens.

She had trouble getting to sleep, but slept soundly. She was roused, when the night was well along, by the sound of voices. She stole out on the stair landing and listened, her heart beginning to thud.

The rotten smell was coming up in burning, bitter waves. The cottage seemed to rock under it. Brenda clung to the banister. He'd come then, the man—her man—from the quarry. She was glad.

Brenda's father was speaking,

"That smell is really incredible," he said in an abstracted voice. And then, to Brenda's mother, "Flora, call Elizabeth and tell her to have Jim come over. Hurry. I don't know how much longer I can keep him back with this thing. Have Jim bring his gun."

"Yes." Flora Alden giggled. "You said Elizabeth was hysterical, didn't you? For God's sake keep your voice down, Rick. I don't want Brenda to waken and see this. She'd be— I don't think she'd ever get over it." She moved toward the telephone.

Brenda's eyes widened. Were her parents really solicitous for her? Were they afraid she'd be afraid? She moved down two or three steps, very softly, and sat down on one of the treads. If they noticed her now, she could say their voices had wakened her. She peered out between the banisters.

Her father was standing in the hall, holding the man from the quarry impaled in the stabbing beam of an electric torch. *He*— oh, he was brave—he kept moving about and trying to rub the light out of his eyes. He made little rushes. But her father shifted the torch mercilessly, playing him in it, even though his hand shook.

Brenda's mother came back from the phone. "He's coming," she reported. "He didn't think the gun would do much good. He had another plan."

It took Jim Emsden long enough to get to the cottage for Brenda to have time enough to shiver and wish she had put on her bathrobe. She yawned nervously and curled herself up more tightly against the banister. But she never took her eyes from the tableau in the hall below.

EMSDEN came in by the side door. He was wearing an overcoat over his pajamas. He took a deep breath when he saw the gray, blobby shape in the light of the torch.

"Yes, it's the same man," he said in his rumbling voice. "Of course. Nobody could mistake that smell. I brought the gun, Rick, but I have a hunch it won't help. Not against a thing like that. Elizabeth got a glimpse of him, you know. I'll show you what I mean. Keep him in the torch."

He raised the .22 to his shoulder, clicked the bolt, and fired. Brenda's little scream went unheeded in the whoosh of the shot. But the man from the quarry made no sign of having received the impact. He did not even rock. The bullet might as well have spent its force in mud.

"You see?" Emsden demanded. "It wasn't any good."

Flora Alden was giggling gently. The beam of the torch

moved in bobbing circles against the darkness. "What'll we do, Jim?" Rick asked. "I don't know things like this could happen. What are we going to do?—I'm afraid I'm going to be sick."

"Steady, Rick. Why, there's one thing he'll be afraid of. Whatever he is. Fire."

He produced rags and a bottle of kerosene. With the improvised torch they drove him out of the cottage and into the night outside. Whenever he slowed and tried to face them, his head lowered, his teeth gleaming, they thrust the bundle of burning rags in his face.

He had to give ground. Brenda was chewing her wrist in her excitement. She heard her father's higher voice saying, "But what will we do with him, Jim? We can't just leave him outside the house," and Emsden's deeper, less distinct answering rumble, " . . . kill him. But we can shut him up." And then a confused roll of voices ending in the word "quarry." She could hear nothing more.

Next day an atmosphere of exhaustion and cold defeat hung over the house. Brenda's mother moved about her household tasks mechanically, hardly speaking to her daughter, her face white. Her father had not come back to the cottage until nearly daybreak, and had left again after a few hours. It was not until nearly dusk that Brenda was able to slip out and try to find what had become of the man.

She made straight for the quarry. When she reached it, she looked about, bewildered. The sides were still sharp and square, but a great mound of rock had been piled up in the center. The men of Moss Island must have worked hard all day to pile up so much rock.

She slid down the sides and clambered up the heap in the center. What had become of him? Was he under the mound? She listened. She could hear nothing. After a moment she sat down and pressed her ear to the rock. It felt still warm from the heat of the sun.

She listened. She could hear only the beating of her heart. And then, far down, a long way off, a rustle within the heap like that made by a mole's soft paws.

AFTER that, things changed. Brenda's father put the cottage up for sale, but there were no purchasers. He and Jim Emsden spent a couple of days piling up more rock in the quarry. Then he had to go back to the office, since his vacation was over. He could visit the island only on weekends. Everyone, even Brenda, seemed to want to forget what was under the rock heap. Brenda's mother began to com-

plain that the girl was getting hard to handle, no longer obeyed.

The children who had rejected her now sought her out. They came to the cottage as soon as breakfast was over, asking for Brenda, and she went off with them at once, deaf to all that her mother could say. She would return only at dusk, pale with exhaustion, but still blazing with frantic energy.

Her new energy seemed inexhaustible. The physical feats that had once repelled her drew her irresistibly. She tumbled, climbed, dove, chinned herself, did splits and cartwheels. The other children watched her admiringly and applauded. For the first time in her life she tasted the pleasures of leadership.

If that had been all, only Brenda's parents would have complained. But she drew her new followers after her into piece upon piece of mischief. They were destructive, wanton, irrepressible. By the end of the summer everyone on Moss Island was saying that Brenda Alden needed disciplining. Her parents complained bitterly that she was impossible to control. They sent her off ahead of time to school.

There the events of the late summer were repeated. Brenda's schoolmates accepted her lead blindly. The teachers punished and threatened. Her grades—for the first time in her life—were bad. She was within an inch of being expelled.

THE year passed. Spring came, and summer. The Aldens, fearing more trouble, left Brenda at school after the school year

was over. She did not get back to Moss Island until late July.

The last few months had changed Brenda physically. Her narrow body had rounded and grown more womanly. Under her shirt—she still wore slacks and shirt—her breasts had begun to swell and lift. She seemed to have outgrown her tomboy ways. Her parents began to congratulate themselves.

She did not go at once to the cairn in the quarry. She often thought of it. But she felt a sweet reluctance, an almost tender disinclination, toward going. It could wait. August was well advanced before she visited the mound.

The day was warm. She was winded after the walk through the woods. She let herself down the side of the quarry delicately, paused for breath, and went up the mound with long, slipping steps. When she got to the top she sat down.

Was there, in the hot air, the faintest hint of rottenness? She inhaled doubtfully. Then, as she had done last year, she pressed her ear to the mound.

There was silence. Was he—but of course he couldn't be dead. "Hi," she called softly, her lips against the rock, "Hi. I've come back. It's me."

The scrabble began far down and seemed to come nearer. But there was too much rock in the way. Brenda sighed. "Poor old thing," she said. Her tone was rueful. "You want to be born, too, don't you? And you can't get out. It's too bad."

The scrabbling continued. Brenda, after a moment, stretched herself out against the rock. The sun was warm, the heat from the stones beat up lullingly against the body. She lay in drowsy contentment for a long time, listening to the noises within the mound.

The sun began to wester. The cool of evening roused her. She sat up.

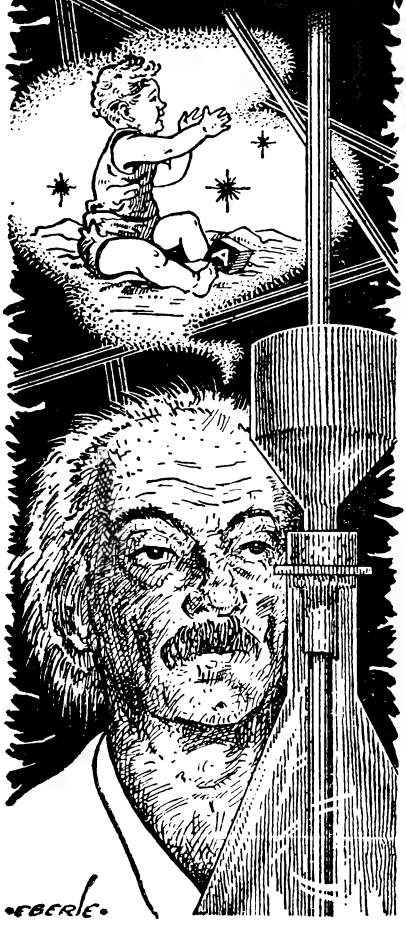
The air was utterly silent. There were no bird calls anywhere. The only sounds came from within the mound.

Brenda leaned forward quickly, so that her long hair fell over her face. "I love you," she said softly to the rock. "I'll always love you. You're not afraid of anyone, not even father. You're the only one I could ever love."

She halted. The scrabbling within had risen to a crescendo. She laughed. Then she drew a long, wavering sigh. "Be patient," she said. "Some day I'll let you out. There's a lot of rock, but I'll move it. I promise. Then you can make me a woman. I'll be alive for the first time. I'll love you. We'll be born together, you and I."

# MAKE ME A CHILD AGAIN

## by David Lewis Eynon




**The case of the sentimental scientist. . . .**

"BACKWARD, turn backward, oh time in thy flight," standing before the window he noticed that the hollyhocks around the well were doing better this year, "make me a child again—just for tonight."

"What were you saying, Charles?" She lowered her fashion magazine and shooed Siegfried so that she could drop her feet from the stool.

"Hmmn?" He stooped to rub the dog's back as it came waddling towards him. "Oh, just a poem." He glanced at the magazine in her hand and smiled, dropping his pipe into his pocket. "Only a poem."

"Oh, a poem." How paradoxical he really is, she thought. And then her mind slid ahead to London, only a week away now. London, and all the things it meant. Things as vital to her happiness

**Heading by Joseph Eberle**

as the chirp of crickets and solitary hours in the laboratory were to him.

"You haven't forgotten anything in your packing?" she asked suddenly. The fear that he might be delayed, somehow—that he might have to put off leaving because of some trifle—pricked at her more sharply as the days before his voyage ran out. Trifles were so important to Charles. He might easily balk over a misplaced book or a damaged instrument.

"I hardly think so," he smiled gently and gave Siegfried a final pat. The Dachshund continued to pester him as he started out of the room.

"Will it be late tonight, again?" she asked.

"Do you mind terribly?" He knew that the added "again" was justified, but he had worked into the night so often, of late. He felt it was more a habit than a vice.

"I'm afraid so, darling. I'd like to get one or two things finished, before I leave."

"All right, Charles." The mention of his departure brought back her anticipation of the freedom ahead, not only from him—one could so easily feel free of Charles—but freedom from the boredom of their bucolic neighbors. "I don't mean to scold. Only that it's our last week together—and then you'll be off in that awful country, picking up your ridiculous seeds and things."

"Of course." He kissed her lightly and they separated, she going to the telephone to call the Pembertons about cards and he—carefully closing the door against the dog—threading his way back to the laboratory.

He found the light and switched it on against the twilight. For some minutes he stared around the room, absorbing the ordered plants and jars and bottles. In the jungles there would be none of this neatness, he realized sorrowfully. But once into the high plains, and then . . . well, he'd heard reports of growth that might be crossed and nursed and brought to even greater flower here, once he returned. He thought of a poem and then, realizing time was short, took off his jacket and rolled up his sleeves.

FOR a second he studied the scrawlings on the wall, down low and childishly executed. Broken pots, neatly piled in the corner with the swept up earth, held his eye a bit longer. Then he turned to the bag from the store, which the boy had brought up from the village and left during dinner.

Quickly he emptied the paper sack, laying his purchases out along the bench. They were all

there, he noted as he folded the bag and slid it into a drawer. The gumdrops, the jacks, crayons and paper—even the tinkertoy set Mr. Havens had offered to search his storeroom for.

"Some little chap having a birthday?" the shopkeeper had asked pleasantly, with the gently forceful concern Charles had always found so refreshing in his country neighbors. The botanist had diverted his attention with a show of interest in a mechanical bear, and then left with the assurance that the things would be sent up with the boy when school was out.

Charles spread the purchases around the room, making careful choices between each item. The gumdrops went on the floor, in the corner. The bench got the drawing paper, and the pencils, still in their paper band, stood up on the stool. The tinkertoy set was placed under the light, in the center of the laboratory bench and the jacks laid in an empty pot near the sink.

He took a last look around the room, made sure that everything valuable or fragile was out of reach. Satisfied, he opened the drawer in the metal cabinet and brought out the tablets.

There was time to replace the bottle and lock the cabinet before the tablet took effect. Time, also, to place the key above the door-sill and bolt the laboratory entrance. Then Charles sat back in the armchair and started reciting softly to himself.

## II

THE knocking gradually woke him. He stirred, blinked at the light and then rubbed his face.

"Charles," there was a note of anxiety in her call, that had almost given way to exasperation. "Charles. Come say good night to the Pembertons, won't you? We've finished our game," she added as she heard him moving across the floor.

"I'm rather a mess, darling," he pleaded. "Would they understand if . . ."

"All right, dear." He heard her turn and start back down the passage. Making excuses for him had been necessary for so long.

He looked at his blackened palms and then forgot the neighbors and the formalities they forced on him. He felt queasy—too much sugar always did that to him—and the taste of gumdrops and the stickiness around his mouth urged him to the sink.

The water sloshed into the beaker. He rinsed it once, filled it again and drank deeply. Over the rim of the vessel he glanced around the room, thoughts tumbling one over the other as he saw the condition of the objects.

His watch showed nine. Two hours, then. Well, he'd been busy, at any rate, if the colored drawings were any indication. He picked up the nearest paper from the floor and carried it over to the light.

Crude. Little dancing stick figures. Some sort of game perhaps. Or a dance, even. The heads were round and flat, and the eyes—carefully executed—were large and empty.

The angular images were scattered over the paper on prancing limbs and somewhere in his mind a tune fled recognition as he snatched at it. Something rhythmic and monotonous that one might chant.

He shivered suddenly, and remembered his clothes in a rush. They lay about the chair. Pants and shirt—with underwear still protruding from them—were draped across the cushions. The shoes sat, side by side, on the floor. His socks had crawled across the room and collapsed near the bench.

AS HE dressed he moved quickly around the laboratory, picking up the jacks that had rolled into the shadows. The tinkertoy set sat unused upon the table. Two hours wasn't time enough, perhaps. Or had he been unable to reach the gaily colored box? He had managed the paper and pencils on the bench. Surely the box wasn't out of reach, then?

But this was enough for tonight, at least. And the risk of discovery. Something must be done about clothes, he thought. Perhaps the Pemberton's youngster wouldn't miss a frock. He vaguely remembered some talk about old clothes for institutions—and a bundle stored momentarily in the laundry.

"Charles, you do look a fright!" She had a fire going, and his tea was waiting by the chair. Siegfried waddled up again and sniffed happily at his cuffs. "Sometimes I think you lock yourself in that wretched room and positively romp around the floors."

He glanced quickly in the mirror above the mantel and realized he'd forgotten to wash. It was better, perhaps, if he didn't make excuses. She'd seen him dirty before. A botanist works in the soil—even she knew that.

"How did the cards go?" he added cream and sugar to his cup and settled back in the chair. "Did you lose the homestead to the Pembertons?"

She chuckled and turned her smile from the fire to his chair. "Would you miss it if I did?" He tried so hard to be amusing—and only amused when he was being serious, she thought.

"I'll miss it in any case—when I'm gone." He stared into

the fire and thought of the months ahead. Months alone—busy months, but still alone with the jungle and the blacks and the disordered growth.

"Darling, while you're gone . . ." She had chosen the moment carefully. They were both alone, relaxed.

"Oh yes, I've seen Lindsey at the bank," he interrupted, knowing what must come, but nonetheless hoping to somehow avoid it. "You'll have the usual as long as I'm away. And Trevor-Benson has all the papers in case—" he searched for a casual phrase, "in case things shouldn't go just right."

"But of course they will, Charles. That's nonsense. It's only that . . . well, that if when you come back, I shouldn't be able to pick up again," she shot a glance over her cup and found him stroking the dog, "where we're leaving off now."

FOR some seconds he didn't answer. It was by no means a surprise—to either of them. And yet he had hoped it could somehow drift on, at least until he came back. But of course, it couldn't, and he admired her forthrightness in dealing with him so frankly.

Other women, he suspected, might have just gone on with their desires behind his back. But *she* wouldn't have him laughed at, not even if it cost her months of the precious little time she had remaining before middle age set in and destroyed the chances she had put off so long.

He felt no bitterness, for in his work he had learned to respect the powerful forces of nature that must impel her. And he knew, as well, how much she was prepared to give up. The comfort she would lose, in leaving him.

What a rotten shame, he thought, that women could so easily trade youth and beauty for such fairy gold as position and affluence. If only they could somehow try them first, and finding the hollowness therein, answer the surge of their physical needs. Instead of staking everything for a few filthy coppers, and regretting the bargain too late.

But then, how many of them did regret? How many, instead, got both satisfaction and security—and very few the wiser? He owed her much, he knew, and pitied her even more.

"I expect you'll have to do as you feel best," he smiled softly and looked at her with tenderness. "But let it wait, at least, until you're sure," he added, meaning that she should enjoy the advantages she had bought as long as she liked. And after all, he felt, it might be that he wouldn't come back—and then

he chided himself for being melodramatic.

"Thank you, Charles, thank you very much." She would have made it up, then and there, in the wave of affection she suddenly felt, if she hadn't spent so many desperate hours deciding that this was the only way.

"Then it's settled," he rose from the chair and started for the doorway. "I'll be up rather early tomorrow, and busy all day, I'm afraid. Didn't I hear something about a bundle of clothes for relief? They're in the laundry, aren't they?"

III

SHE breakfasted late and over her coffee stared out into the garden. How the hollyhocks had sprung up! Charles must have been busy, or he'd have gotten at them by now. She closed the *Times* and gathered the plates—hers and Charles'—from the table.

Perhaps the shears were in the kitchen. Minerva was hurrying through the baking to be finished in time for her half-day. Yes, Mr. Charles had left them by the sink, last week, and she had put them on the shelf in the shed. The maid took the dishes and started the hot water running.

Such huge shears—she'd need gloves, she remembered, and carried them across the living room to the closet. Charles would be pleased—even now—at her show of interest in the garden. She could easily have the plants around the well trimmed in time for lunch.

As she rummaged through the closet shelf she heard the Pemberton's child squalling. A lost toy, most likely. Unless he'd been pulling Siegfried's tail again, and the dog had nipped him in self defense. What a bother children could be—how fortunate she and Charles. . . .

But the cries were coming from the house, she thought. Turning, she stuck her head into the hall and listened. Soft sobs from the laboratory. They stopped as she took the few steps down the hall, then started again as she pressed her head to the door.

Around at the open window she could make out a tiny foot, shoeless, sticking out from beneath the bench. Charles was nowhere about, and she wondered how the Pemberton's boy had managed to get in.

"All right," she called, "I'll be right there. Don't touch anything," she added quickly as she ran around to the back, where the loose doorway would let her pry the bolt with the shears.

As the door flew open the child squalled louder, having an audience, and screwed its grimy fists into its eyes. A shattered

pot on the floor, an evicted plant sprawled in the crumbled earth told the story. She stared at the boy, and realized that the Pemberton's child was blond.

For a second she smoothed its hair, thick, dark, tousled. The child's sobs gave way to gasps as it felt her hand across its forehead. In the corner Charles' empty clothes held her attention.

"Here now, you're all right." She drew the little fists down and wiped the tears away with her handkerchief. The eyes—young as they were—could not be mistaken. Even the nose, still largely unformed, had the beginnings of that beakishness which made Charles look like a kindly hawk.

The enormity of the thing held her in indecision for a moment, but it was too phenomenal to argue with. It must be either accepted or rejected, it could hardly be questioned. When she finally grasped the circumstances she took the child's hand and led it out into the garden, as if the morning sunlight might somehow bring things clear.

Siegfried came lolling up to them and nuzzled the child familiarly. Gaily, tears forgotten, the boy pulled at the dog's ears and winced as the wet nose found his face. She watched, still stunned, as they gambled across the grass towards the hollyhocks.

The maid! Quickly she stepped to the kitchen window. No, her coat and hat no longer hung by the door. On the table a tray of tarts stood cooling. Through the hedge she heard the Pemberton's auto grind down the drive. Then silence, except for the dog's playful growls.

She fetched a tart from the table and returned to find them playing on the flagstones. The boy waited dutifully as she broke the pastry in half, then held out his hand. Siegfried pushed in to get at the jam dripping from the open end and jostled the child back among the flowers.

A thrill of fear went through her as the boy came up against the low stone enclosure of the well. The tart found his mouth and he turned to peer into the cool darkness of the well, chewing slowly as he listened to a frog splash into the water. Her decision was swift, so swift that she seemed to act without thought.

* * *

The phone in the constable's house was answered by his wife. "George," she called her husband from his bicycle repairs, "come you quickly! It's Sir Charles' wife —she says a strange child has fallen down their well!"

# Out!

By LEAH BODINE DRAKE

THAT was the night I ran
Out of the house for good . . .

Airy as loosened leaf
From a bird-forsaken tree
I sped through the moonlit grass!
I was finished with love and grief
And the wilful ways of man.
O I was gay and free!
O but my step was light!
Never a blade of grass
Trembled beneath my foot,
A mink on a rabbit's track
Never paused to let me pass,
A vixen with cubs at play
In a beech tree's twisted roots
Didn't bother to hide away,
A spider-web hung with dew
Neither wavered nor broke
As I went softly through,
And not a dewdrop shook.

But when I came to the pond,
Wading through lily and reed,
And not a ripple stirred
Over its silver and black—
When, gazing within its glass,
I saw no face looking back
Nor the shadow of bending
head—
Then, then I knew I was dead!

Soul to soul they would meet . . . and let the most enduring win.

# THE GRAVE AT GOONHILLY

BY G. G. PENDARVES

"THAT man looks to me like James Burnham," I said to myself, as from an upper deck of the *S. S. PERRAN* I watched the tall, arresting figure of a man get out of a taxi on Southampton Docks and make toward the gangway of my ship. He stepped

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on deck only a few yards from where I stood, so that I got a closer look at him.

"No, not the Burnham I met a year ago," I concluded. "This one is a good fifteen or twenty years older, but it's an extraordinary likeness."

Not until dinner did I discover that my first impression had been correct after all. This old haggard man was indeed the James Burnham I had met at the Goonhilly Golf Club only twelve months earlier. He was my sole companion at one of the small tables in the saloon and recognized me at once.

"I wasn't quite sure," I answered, shocked at the change in him. "You don't—you don't look as fit as when I saw you last year down in Cornwall." It was incredible that one year could have reduced the big easy-going man I remembered to this haggard wreck. He was like some sturdy forest tree struck by lightning. What blind merciless chance had marred him thus?

"I suppose I am altered; everyone tells me so," he replied in a flat disinterested voice. Then he added with sudden passion, "What does it matter how I look, how I feel, if only I can find him? I *will* find him—I will follow him—to the edge of the world and beyond!"

His voice sank to a hoarse whisper on the last words, and I marveled at the passionate earnestness of them. Then lapsing into a dull silence and apparently forgetting me completely, he sat crumbling his bread and looking at his soup as if it contained a riddle he was trying to solve.

FOR the next two days I encountered him only at meals, when he would sit eating like a bird, making a few abrupt remarks to me or to the steward, and taking refuge in long silences when, completely abstracted from his surroundings, he appeared to be wrestling with some terrific mental problem.

We had a rough passage, and by the third night out the very limited number of passengers was so substantially reduced that Burnham and I had the smoke-room to ourselves, when he joined me there after dinner. He sat down by me and smoked—if you call it smoking! His method was to light a cigarette, give it a few nervous puffs, and then let the thing go out between his fingers. He filled an ash tray with matches and wasted cigarettes in the fifteen minutes which elapsed before he spoke.

"Do you remember Donald Harkness?"

He fired the question at me so abruptly that I started and gazed blankly at the drawn, colorless face of my vis-à-vis.

"Harkness?" I repeated vaguely. "Donald Harkness? The name is familiar. A golfer, wasn't he? Ah, yes—I have it now: that young friend of yours at the Goonhilly Club."

Burnham nodded, his eyes bleak with some desperate unhappiness, and passed his tongue over his dry lips.

"Of course!" I added almost enthusiastically as memory revived. "Donald Harkness was the man who never could play off the fifth tee!"

My last words seemed to galvanize Burnham like an electric shock.

"The fifth tee! He played off the fifth tee in the end!" he cried out in a hoarse sudden voice. "He drove as that devil intended he should drive at the last and that's why I'm here," he added, falling back in his chair, his features working convulsively, his fists clenched on the arms of his big leather-covered seat.

I was dumfounded. What did the man mean? It has been a stock joke at the Goonhilly Club about young Donald and the fifth tee; he never drove more than a few yards from it, and was invariably rather upset. I'd seen him step off that tee looking white and sick, and he had a queer trick of glancing back over his shoulder as he did so. Everyone has ragged him about it, and he had taken it all in good part, but at the same time he had never mastered the curious nervousness that beset him at that particular tee during the whole month I had spent at Goonhilly.

BURNHAM met my puzzled eyes and gave the worst imitation of a laugh I have ever heard; then, leaning forward, he put a hand on my knee.

"Listen, Vyner," he said with great earnestness; "I am going to tell you the most beastly story—for beastly it is, and incredible to most people. But you're a writer; it's your business to understand, to learn the hidden things—those awful hidden forces that lie in wait for us, luring us, trapping us, betraying us, dragging us, down into the hells of our own making!"

I assented silently, feeling the desperate need of the man, and nerving myself to try to understand. I had the sensation of being on a rock, seeing a man struggling in a swirl of angry waters just beyond my reach.

"I know from our talks that summer in Cornwall that you do not hold conventional ideas of life and death, of body and soul," continued Burnham, speaking with more calm. "You do not allow yourself to be driven along the broad, easy path of public opinion. No; your mind is alive and growing, not root-bound and moss-covered. I can tell *you*

what happened at that fifth tee—and you're the only man I know who would not think me mad—the only man who could comprehend the hellish trick that was played on Donald Harkness. And perhaps—perhaps you can help me find the *Thing* I seek."

"There was twenty years difference between Donald and myself," began my companion, leaning toward me across the intervening baize-topped table, his hands nervously occupied with an elephant match-receptacle. "He cherished a sort of hero-worship for me, as boys do, you know; my travels and adventures intrigued the boy immensely," he continued. "I had promised to take him on one of my shorter trips to Asia when he was through college—it was arranged for this year. This year!" he groaned; "and Donald is—"

"Did he die?" I ventured, as Burnham sat staring into space.

"Die? No, at least, not what is usually known as death. It's worse—far worse than that." And he began to make patterns with the matches until I could wait no longer.

"About the fifth tee," I put in. "Why couldn't Harkness play off that fifth tee?"

"I told you he *did* play off it." Burnham lifted desperate eyes to mine. "He played and was lost, lost and damned! If only I had traced the history of Goonhilly Downs a week—even a day earlier! If only I had discovered—"

"Yes, if you had discovered?" I ventured.

Burnham placed two more matches, stared vacantly at the pattern forming under his hands; then his haunted eyes met mine.

"That fifth tee." His words were a mere husky whisper which make my flesh creep. "That fifth tee, as far as Donald was concerned, was not merely a little patch of turf: it was a borderland between the seen and the unseen—a sort of No Man's Land! Danger—the most hideous danger—met the boy there; a danger he had no means of understanding or combatting!"

He sank back, and the look of gray despair on his face chilled me to the heart. Suddenly the temptation seized me to get up and go—to refuse to hear more of Burnham's story, but he looked up and read the doubt and fear in my eyes.

"Vyner, for God's sake don't turn your back on me! Listen to me or I shall go mad. There is no one else—*no one*—who can understand. You have had glimpses of what lies beyond the veil—you know—you *know*."

"Very well," I said, dully. "I'll listen, Burnham. If I must—I'll listen."

"You must—indeed you must," he urged. "It may seem

selfish and cruel to put my burden on you, to ask you to fight against such tremendous odds. But I do ask you. What *are* my happiness and health—what are yours in comparison with—?" His voice failed, and he put a shaking hand over his eyes.

"I ARRIVED home from North China shortly before meeting you twelve months ago," resumed Burnham, "and went straight down to Cornwall. The Harkness home was always my headquarters while I was in England, and I always received a rapturous welcome from the family. Donald was the youngest of seven tall sons, and my favorite. He met me at the Truro station with his sports car, prepared to drive me ten miles to Goonhilly.

"I saw instantly that he was terribly changed. I had left a sturdy youngster of seventeen, and found a young man, repressed and melancholy in manner and looking years older.

" 'Have you been overworking or overtraining?' I asked as soon as we were all out of the city's narrow ways. 'You look rather a wreck, my boy!'

" 'Yes,' he assented in a disinterested voice. 'I suppose so.'

"Astonished at his apathy, I did not follow up my remark, and we spun on in silence past trees and tall hedges.

" 'I think I am going mad,' he said at last. 'I've been waiting for you to help me. Perhaps—perhaps you can explain the thing! It's—it's a delusion.'

" 'Good Lord! Delusions at your age? But if you know it is a delusion I don't see how you are deluded,' I objected, trying to laugh off his extraordinary solemnity.

"He looked at me, and laughter died out of me very suddenly.

" 'It's since I came down from Oxford,' the boy continued, 'just this last month. But you—you must be able to explain; you've seen so many strange things you must be able to explain! If you can't—if you can't—why then—then—' he broke off, and fear, like a furtive darting flame, peeped from under his eyelids at me.

" 'I'll tell you more tomorrow, Burnie,' he went on. I'd been Burnie to him since he was a little nipper in a blue sailor suit.

" 'We'll go out on the links after breakfast. Perhaps if you are with me—it—it may not come! But if it does perhaps you will understand—make me understand! God if you could only do that!' he added under his breath.

"NEXT morning we were out early on the Goonhilly Downs, where a very fine eighteen-hole course was laid. It ran

along by the sea, a long rather narrow course with many natural bunkers in the shape of rush-strewn hillocks. I never played on any course I liked so well; the tang of the salt sea and wild thyme, the roar of great waves breaking in mile-long furrows, the wind-driven clouds and screaming gulls, the free wildness of the place never failed to make me feel like a two-year-old.

"As we approached the fifth tee I looked about me and grinned appreciatively.

" 'Just the same pixy-haunted old place! Queer thing, my boy,' I spoke over my shoulder to Donald. 'This little corner of Goonhilly Downs is as desolate and forbidding as the Gobi desert; wonderful how a few square yards of turf and sand can convey such an impression. This bit ahead is positively sinister!'

"Donald teed up in a tremendous hurry and lifted his club, but in the very act he drew back sharply and struck the ball a feeble tap which sent it rolling into a patch of muddy grass a few yards away.

" 'Hard luck!' I told him. 'Try another.'

" 'No,' his voice was queerly hoarse, 'That's my usual drive off this tee. I had hoped that you—that you—'

" 'What's the idea?' I asked.

" 'I give you three strokes,' he replied, 'and start from here.' He put down a new ball in the rough and took up his mashie.

" 'Well!' I said, as soon as words occurred to me. 'You spoke about your delusions last night. I hope one of them isn't that this sort of thing is golf!'

" 'It's the sort of golf I play off the fifth tee,' was the grave reply.

"IT WAS ten days before I found myself alone with Donald on the links again. He had steadily avoided me, and refused to discuss himself or his delusions again, But he had continued to play his daily round of golf with anyone but myself.

"At the fifth tee I watched him narrowly as he prepared to drive off. I caught the look of loathing on his face, the muscles working at the angle of his jaw, the nervously distended nostrils, and stiff tension of his whole body. Evidently he was putting some abnormal compulsion on himself, and when he lifted his club I held my breath for his face went absolutely gray, and his features twisted into a contortion that looked like a grin.

"A grin of agony! In the East I had come across more than one helpless slave, dead or dying, with that same dreadful mask which Donald wore. With the wretched slaves the reason was cruelly apparent, but this boy! Utterly appalled I made a blind

clumsy movement toward him, but in the same moment he let his club swing down aimlessly and his ball rolled forward a few yards and lay in the mud as before.

"He would not meet my eye but walked stiffly from the tee, to put a new ball in the rough some distance away.

" 'Don't you think you had better tell me?' I asked him very quietly.

" 'I want to tell you,' he muttered. 'I want to tell you more than anything in the world. But there's nothing—nothing! It's only that I imagine—it's just a delusion.'

" 'But delusions can be cured,' I reminded him gently. 'If you will tell me!'

"He hesitated, his eyes fixed on the distant sea with a misery I could not bear to see in them.

" 'I'll try to understand,' I added.

" 'It's just this,' he began. 'I want to tell you more than I want anything but I'm afraid—'

" 'Afraid I won't understand?' I ventured.

" 'No, no, not that! I am afraid that if I speak if I tell anyone it may be worse for me. It's as if I might be opening a cage for a wild beast, once I put the thing into words.'

" 'I don't think suppression is good for any delusion,' I countered. 'The sanest way is to drag the thing out into the open, get it up by its roots. A delusion is a plant that grows in darkness and secrecy, and withers in free open space.'

"The boy's face lit up with a momentary gleam of hope.

" 'Yes—yes, it should be so!' he murmured. But still he debated within himself, longing, yet fearing to plunge onto confession.

"At last he picked up his ball, shouldered his clubs, and put his arm through mine. 'I'll tell you. But not here in sight of that place! Come down by the sea.'

"He dived abruptly into speech, as we sat down in a hollow among the dunes, a good half mile from the fifth tee.

" 'It's the hands. It's the hands that close over mine! Cold hands —hard as iron! There is something that is always waiting for me there—it wants me—it wants me!' His voice sank into a whisper. 'I know that if I give in once—just once—I shall be its slave. It is always there, waiting —waiting!'

" 'Give in?' I echoed feebly. 'How, give in?'

" 'Those hands!' the boy's hoarse rapid undertone was that of someone in a delirium. 'Those hands that hold mine—they try to make me drive as they want—to guide my aim—to use me somehow! But they can't—they can't unless I give in.'

"I put an arm about his shaking body.

" 'Don, you poor tormented boy!' I spoke hesitatingly, afraid of checking his confidence. 'This is worse than I had dreamed it could be. You can't stand any more torture of this sort—no one could. Tell me, why do you play off that tee at all? Why not just give up golf altogether or miss out on that fifth tee at any rate.'

" 'I dare not.' The words were scarcely audible.

" 'Dare not stop playing?'

" 'Not now! It would follow me—it would find me anywhere! Those hands would drag me back! I have to stop and fight it out on that tee!'

" 'But, Donald!' I remonstrated, terribly moved by his unnatural quiet fatalism. 'How are you going to fight it out? Do you mean you will go on until your—your delusion dies?'

" 'Or until I do,' he replied calmly.

" 'That is morbid, Don,' I said sternly. 'You must not allow yourself that thought in any extremity. It's terrifying, a most mysterious hallucination you have, but I'm convinced that you can't cure it by your Spartan method. Get right away from here at once; this place is poison to you in your present state of mind.'

" 'I can't,' he said very quietly.

"I SAID nothing to the boy's parents, who were old and easily alarmed, and Donald had taken no one save myself into his confidence. But the next day I took the Cornish Riviera express up to town and on arrival made an appointment with Volsung, the famous alienist, for the following morning.

"That done, I wandered aimlessly about the streets, and finally made for the British museum with the intention of looking up a few knotty points in connection with a book I was writing.

"I was haunted by Goonhilly and Donald so persistently, however, that when I came across an old battered volume entitled *YE ANCIENTE DUCHY OF CORNWALL,* I became immediately absorbed.

"It had been written by a Cornish priest, a famous divine of the Sixteenth Century and was a curious rambling piece of work, covering an enormous variety of subjects. It included fragments of diaries, memoirs, tags of folklore, and records of crime and romance which the writer had culled from many different sources.

"Finally I came across a reference to Goonhilly: *THE PARISH OF GOONHILLY—LORD GOONHILLY — TAXATION — RESTORATION OF CHURCH,* etc., etc. All very prosy and detailed until I saw

the name of Adrain Valsume! It was like coming across a black snake in a bed of primroses. Ever heard of Adrain Valsume?"

BURNHAM shot the question at me abruptly and I nodded silently.

My companion repeated the name "Adrain Valsume" with an accent which was emphasized by the loathing on his face.

"A devil!" continued Burnham. "As child, as youth, as man he was abnormal and utterly evil. Brilliant, cunning and degenerate, he reached manhood and inherited vast possessions in Spain, each year becoming more powerful, more of a menace to his day and generation. By poison and treachery and monstrous cruelties, and above all by a fixed deadly purpose that no spark of humanity ever deflected this Adrain Valsume wielded unparalleled power. Finally he threw in his lot with and became the leader of a terrible sect of ex-monks who had settled in the south of Spain.

"Valsume, having attained to this giddy pinnacle of power, naturally desired to remain there, until, finally, one supreme quest occupied him to the exclusion of all else. The quest of perpetual youth!

"He modeled himself on Gilles de Rais, Marshal of France—that monster who was hanged and burned for his inhuman crimes in the Fifteenth Century. But Valsume even exceeded de Rais, was more fiendishly ingenious in the torture he inflicted, more ruthless in the shedding of innocent blood.

"Like de Rais, he saw himself as a demi-god and like de Rais he believed that the shortest way to attain his supreme desire was by occult means. Alchemy and Black Magic were his mediums."

"But surely," I protested, "surely a man of such learning would never fool himself like that! Black Magic!"

"You forget Valsume lived in the Sixteenth Century. In those days such things were vitally important. The Elixir of Life and the Philosopher's Stone were considered practical and possible. To Valsume, unbalanced by his frightful excesses, the forbidden way of the Hermetic Art appeared the only way for him. He made up his mind to carry out the experiments which death had prevented Gilles de Rais from completing.

"All this was faithfully recorded by the Cornish priest in his *Anciente Duchy of Cornwall,*" commented Burnham, and it was wonderfully accurate, for I had myself traced that infamous career, and was familiar with it all except the final scene in Valsume's life.

"That scene took place in

Cornwall—in Goonhilly, of all places in the world! Valsume's despairing efforts to keep his youth pushed him into the wildest excesses and superstitions; and in his senility he gave credence to every *poseur* of his day.

"A certain Wise Woman of Goonhilly was brought to his notice and he sought her out. Under her direction he carried on his old devil's game of stealing and murdering children to sacrifice to his 'demon.'

"The half burned body of one of his victims was found and identified by the poor demented mother. Young and strong and crazed with grief, she had no fear of the man whose black shadow darkened a whole continent. She lay in wait for him on the Goonhilly Downs, the long knife she used in her fish trade clutched in her hand.

"She waited and she found him at last, and killed him with one strong blow to the heart. Later, the villagers, amongst them the Cornish priest himself, found her there by the body, babbling and laughing and singing wild old songs, her black hair streaming in the wind as she sang.

"Valsume's bones were left to rot there in the marshes, and gradually became covered by the drifting sand; but according to the chronicler, ever afterward that sand remained a barren ugly patch, six feet by four, neither grass nor weed grew there, and year after year it kept its grim outline, never altering by so much as an inch."

BURNHAM leaned forward, letting a handful of matches slip to the floor, and added grimly, "From that unhallowed grave came the horror of the fifth tee!"

"What—what?" I stammered. "You mean that Valsume—"

"Yes—Valsume!" was the reply. "His earthbound spirit haunted the place through the centuries—and after all, four hundred years is neither more nor less than four seconds. Time is only a convenient human invention, a sort of little foot-rule we use."

"Yes, I understand that," I replied. "But all those years—did—did the—did Valsume never make himself felt before? Why should Donald have suffered? What did the—thing at the fifth tee want?"

"There are laws," observed Burnham. "In every state of being there are always Laws. For four hundred years Valsume has watched and waited his chance, and fought to get back."

"To get back?" I echoed uncertainly. "But you say he was always there—at Goonhilly."

"But not in the body. The shadow-life to which Valsume was condemned held no pleasure

or gratification for either senses or spirit! It was a body—a human habitation he fought to regain."

"And has he? Did he?"

"Judge for yourself," was the grim reply. "In the gray dawn of the following day I arrived back at Goonhilly, and made straight for the links. I ran like a demented thing, stumbling over hillocks and rabbit-burrows with the ghostly whisper of the incoming tide in my ears, the cold sea-mist drifting across my face.

"The fifth tee! My eyes went to that spot as to a magnet as I approached it, but nothing unusual was there—the mat and the little red sand-box—that was all!

"I stumbled to my knees beside it and stared unbelievingly, so certain had I been of finding Donald there. Donald or—

"I got to my feet, looked across the marsh where the sea-mist curled and lifted like vapor from a cauldron.

"Then my heart seemed to turn over in my breast. A figure lay face downward not fifty yards away. I reached the place breathless.

"Donald—yes Donald! He lay huddled awkwardly over his golfbag, as if he had stumbled and pitched forward, and when I turned him over, a bruise on his forehead showed where he had struck one of the gray boulders amongst which he lay.

"Then I noticed the golf ball. It was lying a few feet distant, on a rectangular patch of sand where neither weed nor grass grew—a patch six feet by four!

"Adrain Valsume had won at last! He had got back!"

"But you said Donald—"

"It was not Donald I found after all—I had come too late to save him. He was gone—driven out into the dark—robbed of his own body that Valsume might once more walk this earth.

"*Donald had played off that fifth tee at last.* Maddened and despairing, he had chosen to end the unequal fight. He had let those devil's hands guide his own at last—had sent the ball to lie on the grave of Adrain Valsume—had followed after it!

"An accident was easy—inevitable on that uneven ground with its bogs and slime covered boulders, especially to a fear-crazed, devil-driven boy! A stumble—a fall—oblivion!

"You see the trick?" Burnham asked. "In a state of unconsciousness the body is a shell—an empty, uninhabited shell! The soul—the spirit—the ego—call it what you will—wanders free.

"That's what happened to Donald. His soul, young, untried, terrorized by Valsume's fiendish hounding—his soul was set free there by Valsume's grave.

"What chance had the boy? What weapon of defense against the age-old cunning of Adrain

Valsume? He had no chance—no chance!

"And I—what irony!" said Burnham savagely, "I labored to restore that empty shell of Donald's to life again—and I did it! I unlocked the door and let Valsume in!

"WHEN those eyes opened on the world once more—eyes which had lately mirrored such terror and despair—they opened with a smile in them. Valsume's own evil self peeped from under the lids at me. He had come back to his world again, and life lay before him! What might he not achieve! This, and much more was in that first smiling sidelong glance at me."

"You didn't kill him?" I ventured.

"Kill whom? You mean did I destroy *DONALD'S* body, and rob the boy eternally of all chance of regaining what Valsume had stolen from him? No! That was unthinkable—a damnable treachery to Donald."

"But what will you do then?" I argued.

"Rob Valsume in his turn. Lure him from his chosen habitation to some other one, then extinguish the evil flame of his life like a foul lamp!"

"Where is he—Valsume? Is he still at Goonhilly with his—with the Harkness family?" I asked.

"No, no! He fled England that night—was out of the country before he was missed.

"He recognized you—knew you for an enemy?" I persisted. "Why did he not kill you before he went?"

"Several reasons for that," responded Burnham. "He was injured and had to nurse his strength to get away. He was too clever to impersonate Donald with the Harkness crowd. Then, he did not want to run the risk of being hunted as a murderer, for he could hardly do away with me and leave the country immediately, without deductions being drawn.

"And again—and this last reason must have weighed heavily with Valsume—he preferred to play a cat and mouse game with me. He intends to kill me in his own time, and his own way; but my life and death are small matters, he has more important claims on his time and attention.

"My agony over Donald must amuse and gratify him intensely. He prefers that I should wait—and suffer!"

AT THIS point, Burnham drew out a big blue envelope, filled with newspaper-cuttings, all methodically dated and clipped.

"The trail of the serpent," he said. "He leaves it wherever he goes, a black trail of crime! Who

but Valsume is responsible for these?" and Burnham pointed to the cuttings with trembling finger.

"All these—all these are his deviltry! During this last year I have followed his trail, and it was not difficult. Whenever I read of any peculiarly revolting and horrible crime I go to the place where it took place, and always—always—I find that Valsume has been in the neighborhood. Invariably his name—his stolen name—is recorded as a visitor in some hotel, or inn, in the city or village where these outrages occur. No one suspects; no one else connects him with these frightful occurrences, but I know—I *know!*"

"You have never seen him since he left Goonhilly?"

"Never," replied Burnham. "He moves like a streak of lightning, he sears and destroys all he touches."

"How do you expect to find him? Are you relying on blind chance?"

"Chance! I don't believe in that, you know!" Burnham's eyes met mine with something of their old wise humor. "Things work out as we ourselves work them; there is no blind chance to give or snatch away. It is a question of will and purpose between Adrain Valsume and myself. My will—my purpose to destroy him, as a thing wholly and utterly evil! His will—his purpose to indulge the lust and pride and desire which for four hundred years have sought an outlet!

"He sailed on the *S. S. RONDER* ten days ago, from Cherbourg. In the New World, with its wealth and boundless horizons, its colossal possibilities for good—and evil; there Valsume will find his kingdom!

"Will you help me to find him—to destroy him?"

I PUT out my hand, and it was taken in an iron grip.

"You can count on me," I said, and I scarcely recognized my own voice. "I'll join you in your quest for Valsume, if it means wandering the earth for the rest of my life!"

A year later—a lifetime of danger and terror and despair—found Burnham and myself standing in a dark, littered street in downtown New York. It was close on midnight, and a thin wind piped dismally about us, while my heart beat up in my throat, and my brain was like a fiery wheel revolving in my head.

"Ready!" came Burnham's low voice in my ear, and I nodded, quite incapable of speech.

He took a few steps forward and was instantly swallowed in the darkness of a low-arched passageway which ran between two of the battered tenement

houses which surrounded us. I followed at his heels.

We entered a door—very familiar by this time—and climbed up flight after flight of narrow broken stairs. Brutish faces peeped at us from doorways and passages, the air was sour and fetid beyond words, and the sounds and noises arising on every hand in this hive we were disturbing, were scarcely human.

Sounds of quarrels, curses, blows, loud and continuous laughter, and the wail of starving children mingled with the uproar of a cracked gramophone record, which ground on unrelenting through all the misery of that squalid house.

The eighth floor at last! Silence reigned here and the air blew fresh and sweet through open windows in the roof of the long passage. No speck of dirt, no hint of disorder here. The deep red of the enameled walls shone like a sunset afterglow in the light of hanging alabaster lamps. The door before which we halted was sheathed in copper, its knocker fashioned of two interlacing jeweled triangles—the Seal of Solomon! The gleaming mockery of that mystic sign was a challenge to us and the purpose we had in our hearts.

AN UGLY little black mute admitted us without hesitation; for many weeks we had haunted his master's studio; for many weeks been wealthy, credulous students of magic art which Valsume taught there in these secret rooms of his. As secure as Buddha himself from the wild beasts of jungle and forest, so was Valsume secure from the human beasts among whom he lived. Remote and inaccessible as a god, he held his beasts under a spell of fear that cowed the strongest and most brutal.

No wonder that Burnham took twelve long months to trace his enemy! It might have been twelve long years, or twelve long lifetimes, if Burnham had been a man like other men and not possessed of an intelligence that cut through problems as acid cuts through solid steel.

To look at him as he stood at my side, no one would have accused him of even possessing average brains. His jaw had slackened, his eyes were vague and misted with dreams; he was the picture of a man who had chased will-o'-the-wisps from youth up. A man of little wit and no penetration; an enthusiastic follower of new creeds—gentle, guileless, imaginative, and utterly uncritical.

Here was clay to the hand of the potter! Here was an invaluable tool and medium for Valsume and his devil's work of snaring the soul of man.

It was amazing to me to watch

Burnham as he donned it consistently throughout since we had met six weeks ago in this very room, where we came ostensibly as disciples of the occult art which Valsume professes.

It was truly amazing how Burnham had adopted his role of devotee and kept it up without a single break from the start to this very hour. Amazing, because Valsume had recognized Burnham from the first encounter, and Burnham knew himself to be recognized!

In spite of the fact, the latter had persisted on being the obedient, teachable, enthralled disciple! And Valsume had obviously laughed in his sleeve and decided to humor an obstinate and foolish antagonist, who was pitting himself against a power which he had no knowledge to comprehend.

It was to be a fight with the buttons on the foils.

VALSUME thoroughly appreciated the fact that Burnham hoped to come to grips with him through the medium of his own magic art. He realized that sooner or later Burnham meant to pit his will against his own, and fight out the long struggle for Harkness in a psychical rather than a physical arena.

Soul to soul they would meet —and let the most enduring win!

All this Valsume knew; he never disguised his knowledge, but he made it clear that he had no fear at all as to the issue of the combat.

And Burnham knew himself despised, knew that Valsume was merely playing a cat-and-mouse game for the pleasure of it, an amusing little prelude to an inevitable climax; knew that Valsume reckoned him already as his slave—soon, very soon to be in bondage, body and soul, for all eternity.

And yet Burnham played his little role! More and more ecstatic and dreamy he became at each visit to the "Master" until I was bewildered and shaken in my own belief in Burnham. Could it really be all a pose? Or had Burnham fallen under the insidious spell of this cruel smiling fiend?

IT WAS this doubt in my mind that undermined my courage, and turned my blood to ice as I watched what was either the most consummate acting ever achieved by man or else the tottering of a great mind to its fall.

"Ah!—ah!—ah!" the hatefully familiar voice beat in my head like a gong. It was Valsume who stood under the opposite archway in the cabalistic robes he affected. "My pupils are prompt. I hope that fear has left your minds."

"Fear has left our minds," murmured Burnham, a breathless

awe in his voice; his eyes fixed on Valsume, rapt as one who sees a vision of light.

"You are prepared for the final trial, the supreme test of your faith," continued Valsume. "You will give yourself into my hands, submit your very soul to my keeping without one fear, one doubt, one reserve."

"I am fully and absolutely prepared," was the low-breathed reply.

"So," Valsume's eyes were full of triumph. "Your friend shall bear witness for you and for me. He shall see the Great Mystery enacted. He shall watch me pluck the soul from your living body. Have you brought what I commanded?"

"It is here," I answered quickly, taking from my pocket a little feathered body—the cold stiffened shell of a frozen sparrow.

"Very charming, very poetical! A bird. Good! Within the hour that bird shall fly again. Within the hour"—Valsume turned to me—"you shall see the mystery of a soul translated from man to a bird—a little helpless bird."

His voice sank on the last words with a subtle inflection which both Burnham and I understood very well.

Then I remembered the dog—that poor, wretched little beast which usually followed at Valsume's heels. I looked round the room, and caught Burnham doing the same thing and I knew that he was thinking the same thing as I was. If the dog had disappeared our plan had failed. If Valsume had done us the honor to take us seriously and destroyed the dog or even hidden it on this particular night—I dared not think along those lines—Valsume's dog, a wire-haired terrier, with the faithful heart-breaking eyes of its breed, clear brown as a peat stream in the sunlight.

The eyes of his dog—of his *dog!* The dumb agonized appeal in them, the horror and tragedy of them, haunted me day and night!

It was a human soul that looked out from them—a tortured imprisoned soul—the soul of Donald Harkness!

To set him free from his prison to give back to him his human body tonight—this was Burnham's task, and this was the hour at last!

WE WAITED in the low-ceilinged, perfumed room in silence, the sound of our own breathing loud in our ears, and suddenly we saw the dog. He stood in the doorway through which Valsume had passed, shivering and panting, and his eyes, —ah, his eyes! My own burned with tears, but Burnham smiled as he would have smiled at some

terrified child, tenderly, reassuring.

Valsume's voice called abruptly and the dog vanished; a moment later there was the swift whistling lash of a whip, and I saw Burnham's hand clench at his side, but he made no other movement.

Presently the mute was at our elbow like a shadow, urging us by gesture to follow. Valsume was waiting in the other room, where two throne-like seats and a small chair formed the furniture of the apartment. The walls were hung with gray cobweb draperies that made the place a little island shut off by four walls of impenetrable fog.

Valsume, from one of the throne-like seats, directed Burnham to the other at his side; while the mute guided me to the third chair and withdrew.

The dog, at a peremptory snap of Valsume's fingers crouched to the floor and lay with nose between its paws; I noticed a wet red stain on its thin flank.

Valsume leaned forward and clasped his hand about Burnham's wrist.

"Look into my eyes," he commanded. "Look deep and long—until thought and memory leave you. Look into my eyes and see only what I will you to see, until you have no sight of your own any more. Look into my eyes until you see past sun, moon and stars. Look—look until the end and the beginning are all one—look, I command you—look!"

Burnham's body sagged in his enemy's grasp. His eyes were rapt, his face strangely luminous under the strong violet rays from a great lamp overhead.

I saw that the dog was shaking like a thing stricken by palsy, and its stricken eyes were also fixed unblinkingly on Valsume.

Hours—days—years seemed to pass as I watched the beginning of that frightful duel. The cobweb walls advanced and receded in choking billowy clouds as I watched; the violet light grew blinkingly fierce—faded to utter blackness. Horrible fancies possessed me, and I saw Valsume's features leer and peep from behind those misted walls—heard obscene whispers, mutters, threats—felt the heat and stench.

And still those mortal enemies sat and looked into each others souls. Still I waited—waited! And stretched on the floor of that arena lay the dog, and from its eyes the soul of Donald Harkness looked out, and with me waited—waited—waited!

MY SIGHT was failing, and I blinked fiercely, summoning every energy, my cold fingers clutching the small vial which was the key of Donald's prison. My sight was failing—or—surely Valsume was getting

paler, his look more dim and vacant.

Surely the clouded rapture of Burnham's eyes was hardening to something more piercing and compelling.

The dog, too, had sensed something; he lifted his nose from the floor, and for the moment appealed to me. With all my strength I sent my wordless message back of hope and reassurance, while the dog's limp body stiffened and his head grew more erect.

Now I was sure that all was not well with Valsume. He had the appearance of someone paralyzed, who can neither move nor cry out, but who struggles to do both.

Burnham's look was that of an avenging angel holding the gates of Paradise against Hell. The neophyte's vague rapture was transformed to a burning fiery glance, pearcing as a rapier's flash.

Valsume's face grew ghastly; beads of sweat gathered and rolled down from his brow, trickling unheeded to his costly robes.

Ages, eons passed over my head as I watched with agonized impatience for the crisis of the unnatural combat. Life itself seemed over for me—I was a wandering thing among the stars and mist—waiting—and I had forgotten for what I was waiting—the clouds and mist around me were pierced with eyes—eyes always eyes in the drifting mist.

My senses cleared again, and now Valsume knew the taste of fear at last. His mouth had sagged open, his eyes were filmy and vacant, his face as gray as the cobweb hangings of his room. Long convulsive shudders ran through his body.

And the dog—the dog knew that Valsume was in his extremity, the prisoner within that canine body was straining at his bonds.

Slow awful seconds dragged out until I was at the point of shrieking aloud with the agony of enduring their weight.

Time stopped—the whole of eternity paused to see the finish of the duel in that little room of cobwebs.

AH—AT last! The heavy lids fell—fluttered open—fell again—closed finally.

Valsume's nerveless body slipped back and crumpled up on the throne-like seat.

Burnham's hand made a flashing gesture, and at the signal I leaped from my chair drew the vial from my pocket and fell on my knees before the dog.

He knew—he knew! In a moment the burning draft from that deadly vial was down the beast's throat. One violent shudder as the swift merciful poison ran

through the little body, and the dog lay dead at my feet.

"Ah—! Be swift—swift, Don!" Burnham's voice was full of a great urgency.

Once more I saw the tall figure which had been Valsume rise up from his throne-like chair, stretching out his hands toward Burnham.

The latter looked deep into the eyes of that tall figure, took the hands in his own—his voice like a clarion-call:

"Donald! Donald!"

Then I saw the bird. It was moving, fluttering, beating its stiffened wings on the ground where it lay, in the effort to rise and fly!

I flung my handkerchief over it and gathered the little bundle in my two hands.

"Where—where?" I gasped.

Burnham took it from me—I loathed the feel of that fluttering thing between my fingers—and he went quickly to the outer room.

Donald and I were in time to see him close the door of the stove, behind which glowed a white hot fire. Of handkerchief or bird there was no sign.

"The door is shut," said Burnham softly, his arm about the boy's shoulders.

Whether he referred to the stove, or to that other door between our world and that outer darkness, from which Valsume had emerged, I did not ask, then or at any other time.

On Goonhilly Downs there is no longer that gray sinister patch of sand in the midst of the marsh.

The grave of Adrain Valsume is covered with tall reeds—grasses grow thick and green—and yellow rag-wort tosses in the sun and strong salt wind.

*(Continued from second cover)*

### *Kali Calling*

EVERIL WORRELL and WEIRD TALES had quite a bit of correspondence before her story in this issue—"Call Not Their Names"—went to the printers. Some parts of the letters from the author were so interesting that we asked her to tell our readers some of her experiences and pass on some of the information she gathered in working out the story. So we give you the following letter:

The Editor, WEIRD TALES
9 Rockefeller Plaza,
New York 20, New York

*Most of us have been fascinated at some time or times by the ancient mysticism of the East Indian beliefs, and most of us know very little about it. When this fascination made it a must for me to try a story based on some slight aspect of this I had, of course, to seek much information. My quest led me (of course) to the public libraries, and perhaps the most explicit, brief and understandable information anent the Hindu pantheon was found in "Syke's Non-Classical Mythology." Herein the goddess of destruction Kali is described in detail, and this description gives specific insight into her awful functions. Garlanded with a necklace of skulls, the lady holds in her grasp a dripping knife, a freshly severed human head—makes a gesture of peace and at the same time grasps at power.*

*The thugs who killed in Kali's name—thug, the modern word is, of course, derived from these ancient thugs, and the meaning of the word was deceiver—had their inception probably in the mists of earliest antiquity, and today's religion in India no more compares to that of this long ago yesterday than do modern customs of various races who long ago practiced human sacrifice in many lands compare to their early customs. Actually the thugs themselves preserved traditions which even in their day were long past. The thugs of two centuries ago slaughtered their victims and buried them; but their legends had it that in the beginning Kali, the air-borne, had hovered near and that the corpses were hurled backward to her and she caught them in mid air. (It was forbidden, of course, to turn and look upon the face of the goddess.) The thugs of two centuries ago were an unfortunate phase of Hinduism compounded of greed, violence and fanaticism, but the fact remains that the goddess Kali as worshipped in India even today is a figure and a character strange and awesome indeed to*

*the Western mind. She was, and is, goddess of death and destruction, although these are not her sole manifestations. The peace she offers is what might be called the peace of death, and the power at which she grasps is adamant and inflexibly cruel. And yet, there is behind this, logic. Even the dark practice of* thuggee, *centuries gone by (though perhaps in the march of mankind a mere two centuries is not an impressive period) had its dark and deadly logic. "No man dieth save by the will of God!" says Hinduism—and this faith is not peculiar to the Hindu. It is, however, a concurrent logic peculiar to the East Indian or Oriental mind that this obviates the necessity to punish the killer—sometimes even to control him.*

*The above comments touch on some of the things one should bear in mind in an attempt to understand any story touching on the (to us) weird arcana of East Indian beliefs. They have, perhaps, a twofold moral. First, that the understanding of Hindu beliefs takes, for the Western mind, some doing; and second, since that is so, that perhaps I've named my story correctly in calling it "Call Not Their Names."*

*Kali is, I'm sure, a lady with whom few liberties should be taken. I myself should, in fact, unhesitatingly walk right out of a room into which anyone felt disposed to invoke her presence.*

*Everil Worrell*
*Washington, D. C.*

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This volume contains three of her outstanding stories—all of which appeared originally in WEIRD TALES, by the way—and is also interesting as well as valuable to fantasy addicts in that it contains an essay on Lovecraft from "a pupil's view" as well as a very comprehensive profile of August Derleth that prolific author who, as WT readers know, has carried on much of the Lovecraft tradition.

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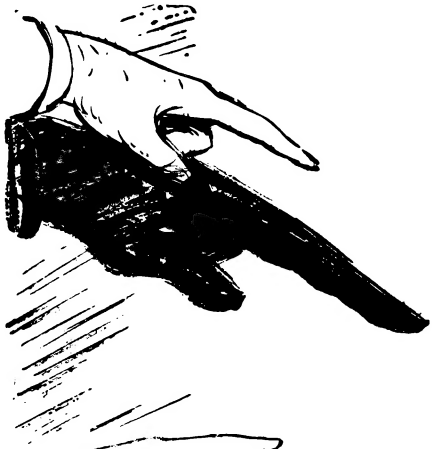

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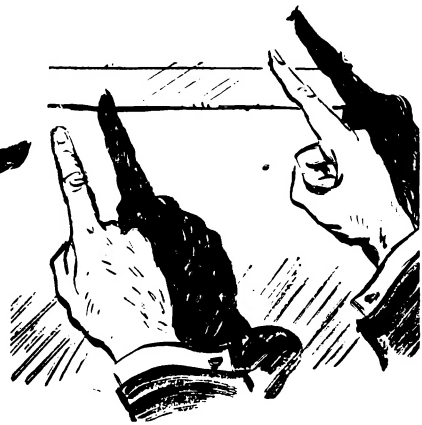
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